

NEWS OF THE INDUSTRY continued

Growing Divot Controversy: Chicago, Georgia Check In

Apparently, there are quite a few superintendents around the country who did not agree with senior editor Herb Graffis when he wrote in the May issue of GOLFDOM that replacing divots are seldom the responsibility of golfers on well-managed courses because the divots do not heal properly.

In July, Henry C. Vogt, secretary-treasurer of the Mississippi Valley Golf Course Superintendents Association wrote to say that replacing divots is necessary. To bring you up to date on discussion around the country, here is what two more experts have to say.

Ray H. Gerber, editor of the Bull Sheet, newsletter of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents, wrote GOLFDOM, saying, "I am sure we have most golfers on our side saying that

divots should be replaced, at least those that are not afraid to stoop over.

"I am sure that divots that are replaced on watered fairways and tees in the northern states one will find that the largest percentage will grow. Chances are this would not hold true on unwatered fairways during July and August, because usually the soil is so hard any divot worth replacing seldom occurs." Gerber said a divot taken on a watered fairway would leave a greater impression than one on an unwatered fairway, so it appears the proper thing to do is replace the divot. Also, he said a fairway looks so much neater when divots are replaced compared to a landing area and approach covered with hundreds of unreplaced divots. And then the fairway mowers come along and increase the number tenfold.

"If it is useless to replace the divot," Gerber asked, "why did it take three-fourths of a century to find out that it is useless?"

To take the story one step further, University of Georgia Professor George M. Kozelnicky wrote in the newsletter of the Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association, referring to both the article in GOLFDOM and Gerber's thoughts: "There is one thing that apparently has not been considered here and that is the growth habit of grass. Is the grass from which a divot taken upright in growth habit or does it spread rapidly in a lateral manner?"

Kozelnicky said if a divot is taken from an upright grass, no regrowth into the area is possible, so it must be replaced. However, a divot

taken from a stoloniferous grass can have its cavity covered quite rapidly even under unwatered conditions. When replaced on watered fairways a bermudagrass divot will knit quite well but if not replaced will have its cavity grown over in a few days.

"The problem with the latter situation is that you still have a depression under grass," Kozelnicky said. "When replaced on unwatered fairways a bermudagrass divot may not knit and since depth is not that great the cavity will fill nicely from the edges when not replaced. The knitting may be accelerated by combing the edges of the cavity into the center with the spikes of one's shoes. This works very well in bermudagrass."

Course Owners Association To Meet Early Next Year

A newly formed association of golf course owners will meet Jan. 21-24 at Whispering Palms Golf and Country Club in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif. to elect officers and appoint a board of directors.

"It is hoped that course owners will respond to form a responsive and viable organization," said Ted Valles, one of the originators of the association. He is president of Golf Inns International, and is headquartered at Whispering Palms. "The Association will be helpful to club owners in such areas as budget planning," Valles told GOLFDOM.

He said promotion of golf in general will also be discussed at the initial meeting with the ultimate goal being to increase sales in all facets of golf operations. He said many manufacturers have expressed great interest in lending their expertise to the association to promote sales and assist in decreasing costs. Coupled with the formation of the association will be a four-day seminar conducted at San Diego Golf Academy. Dr. Frederick Schwartz, the Academy's dean, and Chuck Pierce, academy director, are presently working on the format.

Whispering Palms is located just 20 miles north of San Diego and accommodations will be provided at the lodge or at facilities nearby. For further information, write: Ted Valles, Golf Inns International, P.O. Box 550, Rancho Santa Fe, Calif. 92067.



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