I used to think that HOC meant “height of cut.” Recently, I’m convinced it means “height of conceit.”

Greenspeeds with HOCs of .09 inches are being bandied about by superintendents, like kids bragging about how fast their cars go. Didn’t anybody teach them that speed kills?

GCSAA spends tons of money trying to portray superintendents as responsible adults. But superintendents’ grass-cutting hormones are still going through high-speed puberty. Whose fault is it anyway? Is it some sort of recessive gene that makes superintendents take these risks? Or is it club officials or “influential golfers” who are driving the fast-greens express?

If clubs, or God forbid superintendents, are using the Stimpmeter as a speedometer, then they flunk Golf 101. Every good turfgrass manager knows that Mr. Stimpson was looking for consistency with his invention, not speed.

Don’t take my word for it that speed can kill, just look along the roadside. Speed limits are posted for safety and survival reasons.

Being human, we all have put the pedal to the metal at some point and gotten away with it — even if we knew we were taking chances. It’s like grooming greens for a major event. You can push them to the limit for a few days, but you’d better slow down soon after. If you keep ignoring the road signs and keep taking chances, there’s a good chance you and your greens could crash.

Big egos can lead to road rage, and there’s the old argument that you’ve never heard of a superintendent being fired for fast greens. But offenders beware because the warning signs are there for good reasons. Of course, heeding them is a matter of self-discipline and common sense.

Dips and bumps — Golf course designers need to play traffic engineers with course owners and superintendents. The blueprints should show maximum allowable speeds for the contours of the greens.

Donald Ross never envisioned .09 inches. Otherwise, he never would have buried those elephants under his greens. At these heights and speeds, watch out for scalping.