

There was some interesting information in the recent National Golf Foundation's Avid Golfer survey. Overall, superintendent image and respect made gains. But the survey revealed that golfer's still have a myopic view about maintenance. The results cry out for golfer education about what we do.

Not all of the golfer responses were helpful. Some were too ambiguous to be of much help — like “playing surfaces too wet” or “too many dead or dry spots.” Superintendents definitely need more information before they can decide which of these complaints are under their control and which are not.

And now, the top 20 conditioning complaints according to the survey, along with my comments about them:

1. Unrepaired ball marks on green: This was the No. 1 complaint. I love it because golfers are essentially complaining about their inability to clean up after themselves.

2. Poor bunker/sand trap condition: It's supposed to be a hazard — get over it. Take a lesson from the pro on how to avoid them.

3. Recently aerified greens: The practice is necessary for healthy turf. If you don't like it, play another course while it heals.

4. Poorly conditioned tees: Hey geniuses, you don't need a pool table to hit a golf ball off a wooden peg.

5. Limited drinking water on course: See Maricopa (Ariz.) County's water dispenser ordinance and the club's lawyer before going down this road too far.

6. Rough cut too high: Says who? If you have a problem with rough heights, set maintenance standards so the superintendent has guidelines that will meet your (unreasonable) demands.

7. Slow green speed: Compared to what — the U. S. Open? Shut up and play the course as you find it.

8. Too many areas of dead grass and/or dead spots: This is not actionable without a context. Is the dead turf the result of poor management — or is it just too much shade from the hundreds of “memorial” trees that line each fairway and surround each green?

9. Golf course playing surface too wet: Check the weather report. Didn't it just rain this morning?

Whose Problem Is It, Anyway?

BY JOEL JACKSON



WITHOUT FURTHER
ADO, HERE ARE
THE TOP 20
CONDITIONING
COMPLAINTS FROM
“AVID” GOLFERS

10. Turf damage around the cup from foot traffic: If golfers picked up their feet, there wouldn't be turf damage around the flag.

11. Ball washer out of water: The maintenance staff checks in the morning. Maybe rangers can check them in the afternoon.

12. Golf course playing surfaces too firm: You complainers who marked No. 12, get with the folks complaining in No. 3 and straighten it out. I'm here to tell you that you can't have it both ways.

13. Golf car restrictions: Golfers drive on wet course on Monday and then complain about the mud and rut damage on Tuesday. Duh.

14. Greens watered during play on hot days: I'm thinking this must be a trick question. People who picked this as a complaint aren't playing with a full set of clubs.

15. Fairway grass too high: See No. 6.

16. Maintenance workers on course: If there were no workers, there would be no maintenance. Workers should be courteous, but these complainers should get a life.

17. Frost delays: This is another dumb complaint. If golfers played on frozen grass today, they'll complain of too much brown grass and dead spots tomorrow.

18. Temporary greens: You don't like them, we'll just close the course while we are under repair. Go play somewhere else.

19. Trash containers overfilled: See No. 11.

20. Cart paths in poor condition: Safety issues should be corrected. Edging is nice but has no bearing on playing golf. Pot holes along the edges belong to those who can't stay on the path.

Can golfer education answer all these complaints? Probably not, but maybe we can teach them to look in the mirror first before they start pointing their fingers at us.

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