

**USGA**

Continued from page 3 shoes, except traditional steel spiked golf shoes, were banned on most golf courses.

From the nationwide ban of spikeless shoes in the early 1980s, the results of Dr. Gibeault's study were almost forgotten. In 1991, however, an ingenious inventor, who's name is not easily remembered, developed a soft, rubber spike. This spike could be used to retrofit all brands of steel spiked golf shoes. Unfortunately, it still took three years before this invention, known today as Soft-Spike, gave new life to the game of golf.

In 1994, the idea of banning steel spikes started grab-

bing hold. At the time, I remember being called an idealist for wearing Soft-Spikes during my travels and encouraging their use. I was told over and over by superintendents, golf professionals, and club managers, that until PGA Tour Players took off their steel spikes, the American golfer would never take note.

They were right. It was not until Murfield Village Golf Course in Ohio, home of Jack Nicklaus, instituted a steel spike ban that the tide started turning. The ban at Muirfield Village finally got the American golfers' attention. When golfers from Ohio returned to their winter retreats in the sunny southwest,

they brought with them "a new invention" for eliminating spike marks on greens. From Ohio and then the Southwest, the use of Soft-Spikes gradually spread across the entire United States.

Unbelievably, it was not until this year, when the United States Open returned to Pebble Beach Golf Links, that a major championship was hosted under a steel spike ban to preserve putting quality. It is hard to even imagine that major tournaments before 1999 could be won by a player whose putt was deflected into the hole by a spike mark left by a competitor.

(Please note that the USGA does not officially

endorse the sale of products by for-profit organizations. This agronomist, however, is an idealist who, as a golfer, is disgusted with greens that are torn apart by the time he gets to the course after work.)  
**Editor's note: See page 3 for related story *Stockdale Goes Soft*.**

**Please note:**  
New address and phone numbers for the publisher:  
10928 Caminito  
Alto, San Diego, CA 92131.  
619/566-3400.  
619/566-3555 (fax).

**That Looks Easy**

*or Simple advice on how to make your home lawn look like a golf course.*

by Bob Costa

One of the interesting aspects of being involved in the maintenance of a golf course is the questions people ask regarding our maintenance practices and how they relate to the care of their home lawns. What makes this business unique is that most everyone has, in some way, been involved in the maintenance and care of a lawn and, therefore, believes that they have developed a certain level of expertise. As a result, questions and comments regarding turf maintenance are at times a daily event.

Frequently I have people inquire about the establishment of a putting green in their back yard. A common question is "What

type of grass do you use on your green?" As if the variety we use is what causes the grass to grow so short. After I explain that it is not so much the type of grass, but the height at which it is mowed, I follow with comments like, "you'll need a mower that will cut at less than 1/4", a new one could cost as much as \$5,000, and the green should be mowed a minimum of five times a week." By now I can sense a general uneasiness, a slight shuffling of the feet, but I don't stop there. I conclude that in order to mimic putting qualities the green will have to be occasionally verticut, lightly syringed, and may require an application

*Continued on page 7*

**CAMBRIDGE SPORTSTURF DRAINAGE**  
*no more mud!*

FOR A FREE 6 MINUTE VIDEO CALL TOLL FREE  
**(800) DRY TURF**  
(800) 379-8873

**MICHAEL LANSDALE**  
Vice President

POZ-O-CAP Erosion Control  
Lawns & Wildflowers  
Cal. Lic. No. 583990  
Woman Owned  
FAX (408) 722-2247

**Metamorphosis Hydroseeding**  
INCORPORATED

1022A San Andreas Rd. • La Selva, California 95076 • (800) 99-4SEED



**THAT LOOKS EASY**

*Continued from page 5*

of fungicide. It's apparent at this point that the living room carpet is looking like a much better option and the conversation usually dwindles to something like, "Really? That much for a mower, huh?"

Another question I am often asked is "What kind of fertilizer should I use? Every time I fertilize, I burn my lawn." I explain that burning a lawn is not the result of the material you choose, but rather the application technique, or lack of it in this case, that results in the call to 911. Most all fertilizers have

the potential to burn because they are salts. To compensate for the salts contained in fertilizer, the lawn should be well watered prior to the fertilizer application, as well as after. It is equally important that the material is applied evenly over the entire area. Too much fertilizer equals a high concentration of salts, and there is no amount of water that will put that fire out. "That's interesting," they say. "Salts, huh?"

Then there's always the classic "How do I get rid of crabgrass in my lawn?" My response, of course, is: "Well, it's likely not crab-

grass, but a warm season grass called kikuyu." I go on to explain that this is a variety that originated in Africa and was first used to stabilize the banks along the ocean. Kikuyu is very well adapted to the central coast and is virtually impossible to control once established. I suggest the most effective temporary control is to spray the entire area with Roundup, reseed or sod the area, and then count the days until it returns. A six-month calendar is usually all that is required. They mumble, "Africa, huh?"

I guess the moral of stories like these, if there is one,

is that nothing is ever as easy as it looks, even simple things like maintaining a putting green, fertilizing a lawn, and controlling crabgrass. Next question please.

**Wanted  
Sites for  
Future Meetings**

If you and your club are interested in hosting GCSANC at some time in the future, please call: Ken Schwark at Tony Lema, San Leandro Muni 510/483-7149.

**SUPPORTER LISTING**

**SCOTTS PROTURF**

Fertilizers - Poly S and new Triaform technologies  
Herbicides, Fungicides, Seed, Soil, tissue, water and turf disease testing  
Chuck Dal Pozzo, Sr. Tech. Rep 510/791-8985

**PACIFIC PEARL OYSTER SHELL CALCIUM**

Ask your distributor about this most efficient calcium for turfcare professionals. It reacts fast, doesn't leach away and the residual covers your needs between applications.  
John Mazura 707/762-7251

**RUSSELL D. MITCHELL & ASSOC., INC.**

Providing quality irrigation design and consultation services including bid document development, hydraulic analysis, and field staking.  
510/939-3985 510/932-5671 FAX

Fertilizers • Irrigation • Landscape Equipment




**JOHN DEMING**  
865 SWEETSER AVENUE • NOVATO, CA 94945  
**415 892-4680**

NOVATO • SACRAMENTO • SAN MATEO • SAN JOSE • SANTA ROSA • SHINGLE SPRINGS  
DUBLIN • PACHECO • MODESTO • SAN DIEGO • LAGUNA HILLS • ESCONDIDO • PALM DESERT



**Pacific Sod**  
California's Largest Selection  
of Cool and Warm Season Varieties



**Ray Freitas 1-800-692-8690**