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Coming Up

Joint Meeting with Sierra/Nevada

The October meeting is our annual joint meeting with Sierra/Nevada Chapter at Edgewood - South Lake Tahoe. The meeting will fill very fast, so watch the mail for your notice and get your reservations in early to guarantee a spot.

1994 GCSANC Institute

Site: Coconut Grove Conference Center, Santa Cruz
When: November 2-4, 1994
Hotel: Dream Inn
Topic: Personnel Management
Golf Course: DeLaveaga GC
Host Superintendent: Don Paul

**Job Available
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 Send resumes to: James Ashburn, GM, Hayden Lake CC, 1800 East Bozanta Dr. Hayden Lake, Idaho 83835.

**Tips from the USGA
Why Don't The Greens Hold?**

*by Pat Gross
USGA Agronomist*

Is there an unwritten rule of golf that says a sculled 3-iron from the rough should hold the green? Some golfers feel this way. Many believe a putting green should be like a dart board: if you hit the target, it should stick. Maintaining soft conditions on the putting greens is contrary to producing good putting quality. But what are the factors responsible for producing greens that will hold a properly struck golf shot. The answer lies in three main areas: ball control and backspin, green construction, and maintenance.

Ball control and backspin

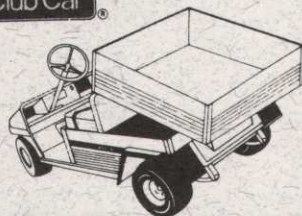
Volumes have been written on the proper way to strike a golf ball. These theories provide hours of lively debate at the 19th hole and are a great source of revenue for golf professionals. Let the truth be known, it is the ability to put backspin on the ball that makes a shot stop in close proximity to where it lands on the green. Backspin is created when the ball is struck with a descending blow. Spin is reduced when grass or other materials get caught between the clubface and the ball. This is most evident with strokes played from the rough, producing what is known as a "flier" -- a shot with very little spin that tends to roll farther. Another factor influencing backspin is the type of golf ball. Frank Thomas, USGA Technical Director, has studied golf ball flight and measured the spin rates of different golf balls. His studies reveal the following: 2-piece balls spin at the rate of 45 revolutions per second (rps); wound surlyn covered balls spin at 55rps; and balata covered balls spin at the rate of 60rps. Furthermore, Mr. Thomas noted that a golf ball loses 50% of its spin after

Continued on page 5

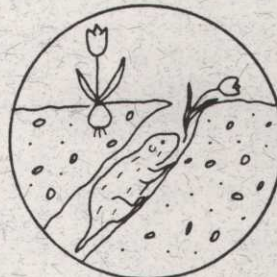
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Continued from page 3
 being in the air for four seconds. The bottom line -- if you want your shot to hold, use balata balls and take a golf lesson, don't blame the green.

Green construction

Greens have been built using various methods and soil mixes which directly influence the firmness of the green. Several factors influence firmness, including: the size and shape of soil particles, bulk density, pore spaces for air and water, organic matter content, thatch accumulation, moisture retention, and several other soil physical properties. Many clubs have taken short-cuts while building new greens by selecting cheap construction materials and not having the materials tested by a laboratory. Then they wonder why the greens are like concrete. But even new greens will tend to be firmer during the first few years due to the lack of thatch and organic matter in the soil. Over a period of three to five years, new greens mature and become more resilient. In addition to the method of construction, the size and surface contours of a green

influence the ability to hold a shot. Are the greens pitched toward or away from the fairway? How big are the greens? Are they tiered or relatively flat? These are all questions related to architecture. Although the superintendent cannot be held responsible for the design of the course, maintenance can have a big influence on how a shot holds the green.

Maintenance

The conditions necessary for good putting quality do not equate to good shot holding capacity. After all, they are *putting* greens, not *land-ing* greens. For optimum putting quality, greens should be firm, smooth, and closely mowed. Many superintendents have been forced by uneducated committees to overwater greens so that poorly struck golf shots will hold the green. This is unwise for many reasons. Overwatering depletes oxygen in the soil, weakens the plant, and promotes disease development. Excessive watering also promotes foot-printing, surface irregularities and "monster" ball marks that detract from surface smoothness and cause putts to jump off line.

Continued on page 6

WELCOME TO THE GREEN

Welcome to the following new GCSANC members:

AFFILIATES

(30 day wait)
Michael Crumley
 Safety Storage, Inc.
 Marketing Mgr.

Dave Kaplow
 Pacific Open Space, Inc.
 President

Glen Bell
 Golden Bear Equip. Co
 General Manager

Douglas Gaynor
 City of Modesto
 Director

Leland Silva
 Harris Landscape Development, Inc
 Operations Mgr.

ASSOCIATES

(30 day wait)
Everett McLain
 Golf Centers of America
 Greenskeeper

Perry Tarsitano
 Almaden Country Club
 Intern

REINSTATED

Terry Leach
 Indian Valley Golf Course
 VP of Operations
 Class A

RECLASSIFICATIONS

Scott Stambaugh
 Quail Lodge
 Associate to Class B

Douglas Poole
 Alameda Golf Course
 Associate to Class B

Ned Soso
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Continued from page 5

Good putting quality demands dry, firm conditions. If properly struck golf shots are not holding the green, you may also need to take a look at your fairway management programs. Mowing heights above 3/4" in the fairways will tend to produce "flier" lies and reduce the ability to impart spin on the ball. If the height of cut is less than 3/4", the problem may be that the fairways are not mowed often enough.

Golfers have to take more responsibility for their golf game and quit blaming the green or the superintendent. Although putting green maintenance has an influence, it is unreasonable to expect the

superintendent to adjust the golf course to suit a particular person's style of play. The handicap system should equalize skill levels, and the superintendent should provide a well groomed course with consistent playing conditions as a test of golfing skill.

So, the next time someone asks "Why don't the greens hold?" you may need to remind them that they are *putting greens*, not *landing areas*.

Recently seen on an automobile bumper sticker on a bay area freeway:

*Are you
an environmentalist
or do you work
for a living?*

SAND

Continued from page 4

and mice found no evidence of cancer.

Further, the researcher whose studies the NCU graduate student found to be "powerful" concluded as recently as 1990 that "there is a great deal of uncertainty" about the substance's link with cancer and even decried "repeated overreaction to every positive experimental observation."

And it goes on. Researchers are forming a line to take their turn pointing out holes in the classification and the process that created it, most notably, the one used by OSHA. In OSHA's defense it should be pointed out that the Labor Department requires just one study indicating a

substance is carcinogenic to trigger cancer-warning rules. Because of this and the international health agency's classification of silica as a probable carcinogen, OSHA's hazard communication standard automatically was tripped. This means that companies must warn employees about workplace materials containing more than 0.1 percent of crystalline silica, which could include many golf course bunkers, sandboxes, and our favorite beach resorts around the nation.

(From: GCSAA Government Relations Briefing, 4/93, via Agrichemical Notes, Penn State.)

Ref: Environmental Toxicology Newsletter, May 1994

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