



Rebuilding Greens: “Is There Any Way To Avoid This?”

When a course is faced with the possibility of having to rebuild greens, there are many questions asked by golfers. However, there are a few questions that arise on almost every project.

How long will we not be able to play our greens?

Once the greens are closed to play, there are three major factors that determine how long it will take to reopen the greens.

- **The size of the construction team**

Four bulldozers and four construction crews will get the job done faster than one. Predictably, while the time to rebuild greens goes down the cost of the project goes up.

- **The time of year the work is done**

Understandably, golfers want putting green construction projects completed during the times of the year that they don't play much golf. Unfortunately, these are the months during which the weather often is most unpredictable, possibly resulting in construction delays and the need to repair erosion damage. Delays potentially can increase the project cost.

- **The time of year the greens are planted**

Of farmers know how important it is to plant their crops when the weather is ideal for plant growth and development. The same is true for grass seed and grass sprigs. For warm-season grasses this means planting in late spring or early summer. For cool-season grasses, planting in the fall is ideal. Unfortunately, these also are prime golfing months, so courses often are forced to plant new greens at less-than-ideal times which can prolong and greatly complicate the grow-in process.

Is there any way to avoid this?

Thanks to major advances in turfgrass varieties, irrigation control, cultivation equipment, and the expertise of golf course superintendents, the complete reconstruction of greens for purely agronomic reasons has declined over the years. However, none of these advances impact the architecture of the greens. To meet the challenges of heavy play and the desire for faster putting surfaces, many greens must be redesigned to provide more hole locations. One of the



most difficult challenges for the golf course architect is to preserve the “flavor” of the classic design while providing additional square footage and more subdued contours.

How much will it cost?

This is always a difficult question to answer. It is much like asking how much a house will cost. It all depends on the size, design, availability and quality of construction materials and even the neighborhood. Also, is this project a remodel or a complete rebuild? Providing an average cost figure provides little if any insight into the cost of a specific project. For this reason, extremely broad ranges are the best that can be offered. On average, complete reconstruction of a putting green could cost from \$7 to \$10 per square foot, but even this range can be extended by \$3 or more on either side of the average.

There is a fourth question that anyone involved in the construction of putting greens should ask.

Where can I get more information on this subject?

Fortunately, there is a simple answer to that question. Visit the [Course Care](#) section of www.usga.org or call the USGA Green Section office in your region. Their contact information can be found at <http://www.usga.org/greensectionstaff.html>. You might also want to view our short video entitled, [Do We Need To Rebuild Our Greens?](#) or our Digital Collections [Is It Time To Rebuild Your Greens?](#) and [A Guide To Creating The USGA Putting Green](#).

