



Nondisruptive practices like venting can be spread out over many days without comprising playability.

SOMETHING IS BETTER THAN NOTHING

BY JOHN DANIELS | AGRONOMIST, CENTRAL REGION

When the golf calendar doesn't allow ample time to complete necessary maintenance practices, turf health and playing conditions can decline. This is especially apparent during the summer months when the combination of extreme heat and numerous rounds causes significant stress on putting greens.

Even with challenging weather and heavy play, a variety of measures can be implemented to help lessen stress and maintain turf vigor. One common practice is venting with small-diameter solid tines to improve water infiltration and gas exchange within the upper rootzone.

Venting is a relatively simple task that typically can be carried out on all putting greens in a single day's time. Nonetheless, venting may be difficult for golf courses that have continuous play without a day dedicated to maintenance. To overcome this issue, a certain amount of resourcefulness and flexibility is required.

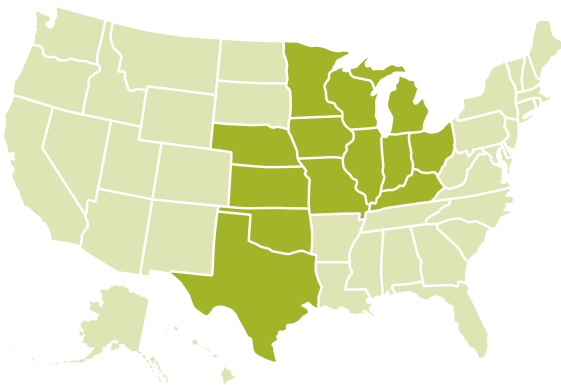
Venting should not be postponed simply because there is not enough time to vent every putting green in a single day. It is better to begin the process without delay and split the task up over several days, venting a few putting greens each morning prior to play. No need to worry about issues with consistency among the different putting greens as properly conducted venting is minimally invasive and should not impact ball roll.

Even golf facilities that are under extreme labor and time constraints should be able to find time to vent some of their putting surfaces. Targeted venting – where priority is given to the weakest areas that routinely struggle – is another worthwhile strategy. A perfect example is only venting a single pass around the perimeter of a putting green instead of the entire putting surface. When it comes to venting, something is better than nothing.



For information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service Contact the Green Section Staff.

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