

Can't Wait To Innovate

By Larry Gilhuly, agronomist, West Region | March 17, 2017



The 2017 North American Golf Innovation Symposium focused on improving the golfer experience, resource management and the future of golf course maintenance (USGA/Steven Gibbons).

The goal of every conference is to have the attendees leave with "memory moments" that they can take with them and share with others. The 2017 North American Golf Innovation Symposium in Vancouver, British Columbia, evoked many memory-making moments through exciting topics and excellent speakers. Four topics were of particular importance to those interested in turf management and golfer enjoyment:

The future of turf maintenance – Dana Lonn, managing director of the Center for Technology at the Toro Company, provided a glimpse of new technologies related to golf course maintenance that will help facilities reduce resource consumption and increase efficiency. From robotic mowers to enhanced water-use sensors, Lonn covered a wide array of topics related to both environmental and economic sustainability for the golf industry.

Providing a more player-friendly golf course – This panel discussion focused on how to improve the golfer experience while keeping costs under control. The highlight of this

session was when Golf Course Architect Bruce Charlton discussed the [Longleaf Tee System](#). This simple idea provides a player-friendly course based on skill levels, enhances pace of play, reduces maintained acreage and can potentially increase revenue for golf facilities.

Changes to the Rules of Golf – The USGA and The R&A recently unveiled a preview of [proposed changes to the Rules of Golf](#). Many of the proposed changes are focused on improving pace of play while others hope to make the rules easier to understand and follow. Many of the proposed changes also have a positive impact on golf course maintenance operations.

Introduction of USGA Resource Management – USGA Resource Management is a web-based tool that will help golf course superintendents efficiently manage golf courses. It will help superintendents accurately measure and manipulate the resources allocated to defined areas of a golf course such as greens, tees, fairways, bunkers and rough. It also helps superintendents manage the dynamic aspects of golf course maintenance such as weather, turf health and traffic patterns. Gathering and analyzing this data will help facilities manage their maintenance in a way that reduces costs while improving the golf experience.

If you have a chance, [watch](#) some sessions from the symposium. I don't know about you, but we can't wait to innovate.

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