



*Posting daily green speed readings unnecessarily elevates the importance of green speed over other aspects of putting*

## TO POST OR NOT TO POST

BY CORY ISOM | AGRONOMIST, WEST REGION

Two curious golfers approach the green that the superintendent and I are standing on. One of them notices I'm holding an aluminum bar that is 36 inches long and 1.75 inches wide, with a 145-degree, V-shaped groove extending along its entire length. This golfer knows his stuff and asks the obvious question, "How fast are they today?" I reply in jest, "35.7." The golfer says, "Cool, they seem like they're rolling pretty good." A couple of chips and three-putts later, the golfer and his partner continue their round none the wiser about how fast the greens really are.

Many great articles have been written over the years explaining the purpose of the Stimpmeter® and the myriad of ways that it has been used and abused, so I won't beat that dead horse. Instead, this update will focus on the pros and cons of publicly posting Stimpmeter readings at your course.

Let's start with the pros:

There are none.



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Now on to the cons:

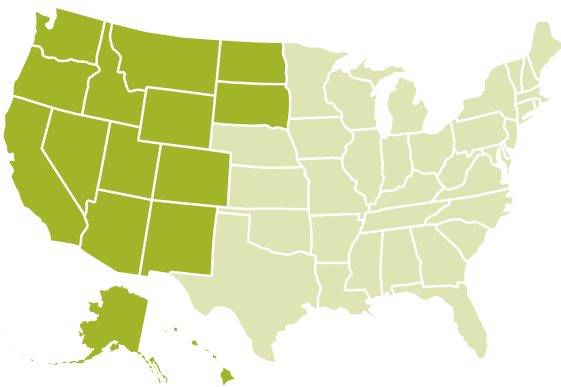
The posted number is never going to be totally accurate. Green speeds change throughout the day and individual greens perform differently due to variable growing environments and surface conditions. While superintendents understand all the caveats that come with a given green speed number at their course, golfers do not. So, is there really any benefit to posting a number that isn't fully accurate anyway?

Does your facility really want golfers thinking the greens are faster, or better, when the speed climbs from 9' 4" to 9' 7"? The reality is that many changes in speed would go totally unnoticed by the vast majority of players. However, seeing the posted number changing daily alerts golfers to minor differences they don't need to know about to play well or enjoy their round.

Side effects may include "Stimp-envy." For example, a golfer could arrive at the first tee saying, "I just played over at Platypus Country Club. Their greens were running 13' 6". How come we're only at 9' 3" today?" Discussions that involve comparing conditions between courses are already hard enough for superintendents to manage without throwing in green speed readings. Let's not throw another log on the already raging comparison dumpster fire.

Posting green speed unnecessarily elevates the importance of speed above other aspects of putting green quality and overall course conditioning. Do you post the particle size analysis of the bunker sand? What about firmness readings in landing areas? Or better yet, how many millimoles per square meter of photosynthetically active radiation are hitting your most-shaded greens throughout the day? All these things are important components in golf course conditioning, but we are not posting them. Some things may be better left unsaid.

If you're currently posting green speeds, this may be the perfect opportunity to reduce touch points at your facility and misplace the sign permanently. You can blame it on COVID-19. Otherwise, think before you post.



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