

Your Letters...

Bunker Follow-Up

Will Bowden's tips on perimeter bunker drains in the March edition of Greenkeeper International are an intriguing answer to the perennial greenkeeping headache of sand wash-out.

As a greenkeeper, I find it impossible to envy the poor souls whose job it is to return the sand from whence it came. As a golfer, I find it tricky to predict the reaction of a ball played from wet/compacted/contaminated/inconsistent sand. The article could have gone further to suggest that bunker design is the sole cause of sand wash-out.

One of the most important considerations in building a bunker, or indeed any feature on the golf course, is water movement and there are two aspects of water movement that must always be catered for within the design.

Firstly, surface run-off should never be directed into bunkers and secondly, bunker faces should have a gradient that is neither so steep nor so long that it is predisposed to repeated sand wash-out.

It is especially disappointing to see modern courses where the architect has had no thought for the effects of wash-out: I have seen one recently opened course where a green is contoured to direct water into a greenside bunker.

Some might argue that an establishment with large labour resources can afford the luxury of sand wash-out because they have the manpower to redistribute washed out sand after every heavy downpour.

However, the quality of the sand is of prime importance to the golfer and sand that is washed out frequently becomes contaminated with soil particles and hence acquires unsavoury properties. It becomes compacted and thus difficult to "fluff up" for the golfer; and the contaminants will impede and eventually totally inhibit drainage.

How many greenkeepers have heard the golfer's cry: "Why is the sand in this bunker different to everywhere else?" And how many greenkeepers can genuinely convince the golfer that the sand in this bunker is exactly the same, but for the contamination caused by water?

Those who design bunkers that are susceptible to frequent sand wash-out are not only placing an extra, unwanted burden on greenkeepers, but they are failing the golfers whom they are paid to serve.

Richard Andrews, Highgate Golf Club

Call for Ladies' Forum

Calling all lady greenkeepers - I am hoping to arrange a 'lady greenkeepers' forum' at BTME Harrogate next year. The forum would discuss various issues directly affecting women in the golf course industry and ways of improving the accessibility and development opportunities for us, as well as looking towards raising the profile of lady greenkeepers to encourage more people to enter the profession.

I was recently asked why so many women start in greenkeeping only to leave after a few years? Although there are many different factors, I feel it can be a very lonely and intimidating career always feeling you have to go a little bit further to be able to get ahead, this in turn got me thinking, the GCSAA have a forum for women at their annual conference and show.

It is a great opportunity to meet other lady greenkeepers and discuss the future as it directly relates to us. It is very important that I get as much support and generate as much interest as possible, so please contact me with your thoughts and ideas: e-mail to: wendypob@hotmail.com

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YOUR LETTERS ARE REQUESTED!

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