



I heard a great line at the GCSAA convention in Las Vegas. On Sunday of the conference, there was a general educational session titled "Grow Your People Skills." C. Michael Jousan of the Clear Communication Company talked about good people skills. He stated, "Keep your words soft because you may need to eat them someday!" How true this is. My thought is today's golfers better keep their spikes soft, or they may not play someday! The soft spike charge is on.

Let me tell you about some of the facts about soft spikes. The MAGCS will be "spikeless" at all of our events this year. We will have soft spikes available but would like to have our members change them on their own before a Midwest event. Talk to Luke Strojny, our golf chair, about receiving some. I recently read an article in the *Aurora Beacon News* by Bill Kindt about the momentum of soft spikes. Some of the facts in the article include:

- Every public and private course in Tulsa, Oklahoma, will be spikeless this year.

- The Weekly Golf Challenge Tour will be spikeless for all of its 28 events.

- The Illinois PGA will make spikeless shoes mandatory for its events in 1997.

- Many private clubs within the ranks of the Midwest are spikeless already.

- Several public courses, such as Ruffled Feathers, Odyssey and Orchard Valley, will push for the use of soft spikes in 1997.

Our own Jim "Bradley Boy" McNair will try a novel idea this year. Jim plans to rope off a section of his practice putting green to soft spikes only. He hopes to show golfers the difference between steel spikes and soft spikes. I think that Jim has a great idea there. Communication will be the key in making the switch from steel to soft. Maybe a few other facts will help convince the golfers at your club to make that change.

According to a USGA study, the average golfer wears 12 spikes on each shoe and takes an average of 56 steps on each green. On an 18-hole facility with 200 rounds being played, that makes 2.5 million spike marks per day. While you tour your course in the late afternoon, you will see the aftermath of a long day of play. Communicate to your players that a soft spike green will not be as torn up as the old steel spikes. Take a survey to see what the golfers want. Have people talk to clubs that are near your own to see how they feel about changing over. I know a switch to straight sand topdressing forced my club to make the change. Other clubs may be in the same boat.

Comfort, safety and tradition may be some of the reasons given for not making the change. Many people I have talked to enjoy the feel of spikeless. Have your players try them out. Safetywise, not many incidents have been reported, as far as I know. Tradition will always be a strong reason for not making the change. Tradition continues to be thrown out the window everyday. The golfers of the '90s demand the best conditions that money can buy. Tell your golfers to go out and spend a few bucks on a pair of soft spikes. I think they will like the change! Now, on to divots, ball marks, geese . . .

Ed Braunsky, CGCS  
President, MAGCS