

**Then and Now, The Concern . . .**  
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molded type of golf shoe being produced by companies such as Nike, Etonic and Reebok? These shoes are nothing more than the football shoes that have been used for decades on fields featuring a synthetic playing surface that goes by the name of "Astroturf."

The advertisement for the Nike Air Zoom soft spike golf shoe states that its 118 points of contact were specifically designed and engineered for maximum grip with minimum damage. Judging from the turf damage I have seen this shoe create, I would change that phrase to a more appropriate statement, such as "these 118 points of contact were specifically designed to grip and rip the turf" so the foursomes behind you as well as the course superintendent can "cry foul all day long."

The Etonic Difference, however, is perhaps the most turf-tearing shoe I have ever seen. It has countless 1/8" diamond-shaped spikelets that scuff and tear up putting surfaces. These tear the turf to the point where we have had to send men out the next day to cup out the denuded areas shredded apart by these shoes. Believe me, they leave a tell-tale pattern behind. The Reebok shoe

is similar, featuring a series a V-shaped grooves that extend out 3/8". These patterns leave inden-

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tations in the turf until it grows level with the surrounding turf some two-three days later.

My intent here is not to slam these shoe manufacturers, but to point out the irony here. I believe that the whole concept behind the soft spike movement was to eliminate the damaging effects of metal-spike golf shoes. The goal behind introducing soft spikes was to provide quality putting surfaces in both morning and afternoon.

Not all golfers who wear the above-mentioned shoes are out there disrupting putting surfaces. It is the foot dragger and the person who turns on the balls of his/her feet who cause the majority of turf problems. In my experience, traffic from metal spikes actually causes less damage, and the damage heals much more rapidly, than the damage caused by golfers walking improperly with the new multistudded shoes.

In closing, I urge all shoe manufacturers to reconsider their golf product lines, if for no better reason than their love of and commitment to the game. One of the prominent movements we are seeing in golf right now is the "bigger is better" mentality. We now have oversized irons and oversized drivers; for the good of the game, we do not need oversized and overstudded soft spike shoes! 

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## GCSAA News

 Novartis, Rain Bird, Textron and Purcell Technologies, in partnership with the GCSAA, have announced the call for entries for the 2000 Environmental Steward Awards. The award seeks to recognize the accomplishments of golf course superintendents around the world who have demonstrated a commitment to environmental stewardship efforts on the golf course. Applications

are available through the GCSAA Service Center (800-472-7878) and from each of the sponsors. You can also print out an application from the GCSAA's Web site ([www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org)) and submit your entry electronically. Deadline is October 1, 1999.

Now available on the GCSAA Web site: articles to post at your facility or publish in your facility's newsletter! The topics

range from golf course etiquette and turf management terminology to pesticide application and lightning safety. Download articles from the GCSAA Web site at [www.gcsaa.org/golfers/for-golfer\\_fr.html](http://www.gcsaa.org/golfers/for-golfer_fr.html) or call the GCSAA Service Center at 800-472-7878 for assistance. If you submit an article for publication in your facility newsletter, please give credit to the GCSAA. 