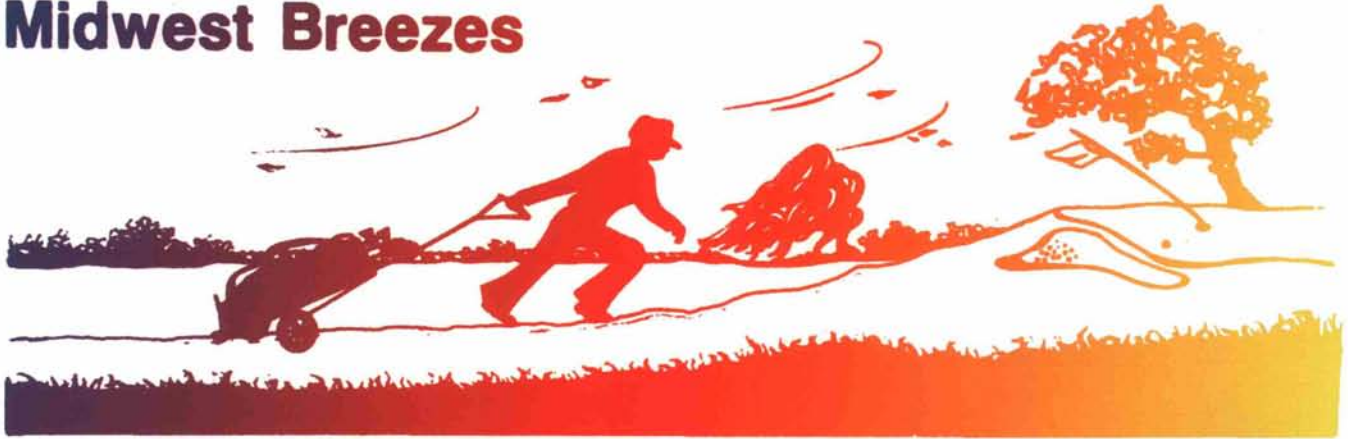


Midwest Breezes



Preventing Bunker Washouts at Indian Lakes' Blackhawk Trace

Indian Lakes Resort is a 36-hole facility consisting of the 18-hole Blackhawk Trace and the 18-hole East Trail. Blackhawk Trace was recently renovated with the first nine holes reopening in 2002 and the second nine holes in 2003. Part of the renovation included rebuilding all of the bunkers.

The new style of bunkering features a combination of both grass-facing and sand-flashing at slopes as severe as 5:2. To help reduce potential washouts on these severe slopes, Sand Trapper bunker matting was installed along all of the bunker faces during the construction. The matting is a porous material that is secured to the bunker floor before filling the bunker with sand. It works to prevent washouts by allowing rainfall to pass through the porous matting while holding the bunker sand above in place. The matting was installed on all bunker faces from the top edge of the face all the way down to the flats of the bunkers. Securing took place with 6" sod staples at 8" spacings before hauling in any sand. Results thus far have been very good.

Superintendent Chuck Ardell reports that the bunker matting has performed outstandingly over the past three years. In fact, he has yet to see a single bunker washout, even after heavy rainstorms. The worst result he has encountered has been some very minor channeling on his most severe bunker face.

Chuck emphasizes that the key to long-term successful performance of bunker matting is meticulously maintaining adequate sand depth. If the sand becomes too shallow, the matting easily can be pulled up or torn by a mechanical rake or even by hand-raking, which is how the majority of Indian Lakes' bunkers are managed. Chuck maintains the flat areas of his bunkers at 4" and the faces at 2". The 2" depth on the faces helps balls roll off of the severe slopes and down into the flat areas. He finds that those depths provide the best playability while minimizing the chances of damaging the bunker matting. While Chuck admits that the time devoted to maintaining proper sand depths can be great, it far outweighs the labor hours and headaches associated with repairing bunker washouts.

—Brian Mores
Inverness Golf Club



Sand Trapper bunker matting was installed along all bunker faces during construction.



Bunkers before renovation.



Bunkers after renovation.

(continued on page 9)