

# Watching Your Tees & Q's



By: Bud White  
Southeastern Director  
USGA Green Section

## Winter Traffic

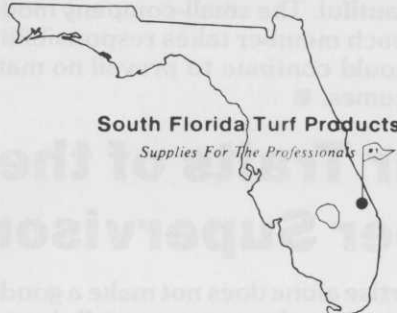
As play begins to back up on Florida golf courses this winter, clubs should be aware of the potential problems and hazards from this increased concentration of traffic. Many golf courses in Florida over the last several years have experienced significant browning of tees and fairways from the heavy amounts of traffic and colder periods during the winter months. Those golf courses which have restricted the traffic to the rough areas or significantly limited traffic to the rough areas have seen much better playing conditions on the fairways throughout the year.

The closer height of cut on the tees and fairways reduces the grass's ability to withstand heavier traffic during times of the year when growth is limited. This is due primarily to a lesser leaf area index of the grass and thus the grass has a reduced ability to grow, manufacture food and provide a greater cushion to the traffic itself. The higher height of cut in the roughs allows the bermudagrass to better withstand these heavier amounts of traffic during times of reduced growth. Also, the roughs are out of the immediate play areas and any damage that may occur from golf cart traffic in the rough areas would very much reduce the effects of the overall playing conditions on the course. By removing the traffic in the fairways, golfers greatly reduce the soil compaction that ultimately occurs.

The one drawback with restricting golf cart traffic to the roughs is the significant wear and compaction that develops in the immediate rough area adjacent the fairway. This 10 to 15 ft. wide band which supports the majority of traffic will require one to two extra aerifications per year in the late spring and mid-summer to offset the additional traffic imposed. If the extra aerification program is established in these areas, along with additional fertilization with a complete fertilizer, then excellent turf health will be maintained in these areas, but the increased aerification frequency in these areas will not inconvenience the golfers.

Make your golfing membership aware of the potential damage that can be imposed by golf cart traffic, and how helpful they can be to the golf course by restricting their golf cart traffic to out-of-play areas. Once these limited

access programs to fairways have been in place for about a year, the entire golfing membership will realize the benefits through improved playing conditions on the fairways. If this program can be successful for the first year, then the golfing membership will be supportive of the idea because of these improved playing conditions throughout the year. In closing, remember — the fairways, tees, tee shoulders and green perimeters are no place for concentrated golf cart traffic at any time of the year, but especially during the winter when we experience reduced or no growth of the bermudagrass. Education of the golfers is the key! ■



**South Florida Turf Products**  
*Supplies For The Professionals*

---

**ED HAITHCOCK  
DARRYL REJKO  
SONNY SMITH**

**1-800-432-2214**

---

**Distributors for  
Howard Fertilizers**

**QUALITY FERTILIZERS & CHEMICALS  
FOR THE TURF INDUSTRY**

---

P.O. Box 8081  
Jupiter, Florida 33468