



Number 16 North. This challenging par 3 is enough to test the mettle of even the most accomplished player. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

woodpeckers, ducks, wading birds and occasional bald eagle seen by Calhoun on the South Course.

Speaking of wildlife takes us to the West Course on the mainland, and a different habitat but one having some of the same critters like bobcats, rabbits, hawks and otters. In addition, Superintendent John Curran, a Penn State graduate and six-year veteran of Johns Island lists endangered or threatened species like scrub jays and gopher tortoises along with armadillos, alligators, owls, ospreys and raccoons making homes or foraging on the course.

The West Course doesn't have the drainage and shade challenges presented by the courses on the island. But sandy, well-drained soils have their demands as well, Curran explained.

"We have to manage our nutrient and moisture levels very closely. Because the soil profile drains so well, we only fertilize as needed, keeping the turf healthy but not lush. We basically spoon-feed the turf the nutrients it needs, putting out only small amounts at a time to prevent leaching. We maintain adequate moisture levels by infrequent deep watering and supplementing by hand watering when and where needed."

The sandier soil provides a good habitat for the pesky mole cricket, one of Florida turf's major nemesis, at least until Chipco Choice came along. Curran says, "We apply Chipco Choice to the fairways approximately every three years. The roughs are spot-treated with baits and Orthene. In general we only treat insect infestations if they exceed a tolerable threshold level. Our goal is to minimize pesticide application. All of our weed-control

programs are done by handgun spot spraying."

Reducing pesticide use is also one of the goals of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program and all three of the Johns Island courses are nearing completion of achieving certified status in the program. Since nearly half of the acreage of the West Course property is native vegetation, a very intensive program is in place to maintain the natural look by constantly keeping after the invasive plant species that try to take over.

Besides the challenge of managing the unique and sometimes demanding habitat, Curran and his staff had the honor of hosting a U.S. Open Qualifier in 2002. This brings us back the honcho of this operation, Greg Pheneger, who earned his spurs preparing for special events.

Pheneger, a dedicated family man, who admittedly wept tears of joy at the birth of his two sons, cites his parents' constant family devotion and the family-first, but strong work ethic of mentor Luke Majorcki as major influences in his life and career. He says his football coach Paul Lombard taught him that he could be a leader, and Greg has shown every indication of that trait as he brings new ideas and challenges to the Florida GCSA.

"We are in a service industry and our job is to serve our customers. They may be business owners, professionals, multimillionaires or someone like you or me. No matter who it is, their opinion counts and should never be ignored."

If you read Pheneger's "President's Message" in the front of this issue, you will see that he is not ignoring anyone and he's trying to include everyone.

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Number 12 North. Architect Craig Shriener renovated the original 1971 Pete Dye design to relocate features to enhance playability as the trees and course matured and changed shot angles. Photo by Daniel Zelazek

Fun Facts



Here are some things you may not know about our cover story superintendent

1. Car: Volvo S80
2. The last good movie I saw: Not "G" Rated would be "The Sixth Sense"
3. I stay home to watch: 24 Hours
4. The book I've been reading: Harry Potter & The Order of Phoenix
5. Favorite meal: Alaskan King Crab, baked Potato, corn on the cob; & a cold Becks Light!
6. Favorite performers: Robin Williams and Eric Clapton
7. Prized possessions: Grady White Boat and Golf Ball Collection
8. Personal Heroes: My father
9. Nobody knows that I: Like the Road Runner (but

- really pull for the Coyote)
10. I'm better than anyone else when it comes to: Working through concerns
11. If I could do it over: I would learn to play the piano
12. I'd give anything to meet: Abraham Lincoln
13. My fantasy is: To win the lottery and travel the world
14. The one thing I can't stand: Very pushy people
15. If I could change one thing about myself: I wish I were a better writer, especially now that I am going to have to write more articles
16. My most irrational act: Jumping off of a cliff into a quarry lake.
17. The words that best describe me: Trustworthy; committed; responsible (I would make a good pet dog)

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Number 18 South from behind the green. The lakes on the North and South course aren't just for aesthetics and challenging golf shots. They play a key role in stormwater management. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

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The constant easterly sea breezes sculpt and shape the landscape on the coastline and the golf course.

Johns Island Tour

Photos by Joel Jackson.



An oscillating fan was installed on No. 6 South to combat shade induced dampness on the green.



Are rotary mowers becoming a trend in turf management?



Converting thin turf areas to fern beds in shady areas just makes environmental sense.



Johns Island Club Golf and Grounds Management Team. From left, front row: Barbara Tierney, administrative assistant; Chuck Calhoun, South superintendent; Gary Sampsen, North assistant superintendent; Barry Balavender, West second assistant superintendent and David Foster, landscape director. Back Row: John Curran, West superintendent; David Harrer, South assistant superintendent; Lukas Harvey, West assistant superintendent and Tim Nolan, North superintendent.

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According to the etiquette section in the USGA Rules of Golf, players are responsible for repairing any damage they make to the green. Photo by Joel Jackson

By Joel Jackson

According to a recent National Golf Foundation survey on the attitudes and expectations of avid golfers, a couple of the top-20 bothersome complaints about course conditioning was the existence of unrepaired ball marks and divots and the condition of teeing areas, which I took to mean more divots and less turf. These complaints had somewhat of a rankling effect on this old retired superintendent, given that ball-mark and divot repairs are the responsibility of the golfers themselves and not the superintendent and his staff. If you don't believe me, look in the USGA's "The Rules of Golf for 2002-2003," Section 1, page 2, Etiquette, the sub-section titled, Care of the Course.

In addition to talking about carefully filling up and smoothing over all holes and footprints made in a bunker, and not damaging greens with flagsticks, shoes, golf bags and putters and following local golf cart traffic regulations and not taking divots during practices swings the section says and I quote,

A player should ensure that any divot hole made by him and any damage to the putting green made by a ball is carefully repaired. On completion of the hole by all players in the group, damage to the putting green caused by golf shoe spikes should be repaired.

The USGA just made one small error. They should have put that section somewhere on page 13 or beyond and attached some stroke penalties to the flagrant violations of these "rules" of etiquette. Maybe people playing golf

would have paid more attention to fixing up these blemishes if they had to add a stroke to their score for each ball mark or divot that went unrepaired. Since the courtesy and etiquette guidelines don't fall under the penal sections, people blow them off and then have the gall to complain about them, and the buck gets passed on to golf course maintenance to spend labor dollars to clean up after the players.

We can discuss the history, traditions, and state of the game and golfer etiquette till the cows or the night water-man comes home, or we can visit with five FGCSA members who talk about how they deal with ball marks and divots at their golf courses, remembering that the buck always eventually stops with maintenance.

Grasslands C.C. Education is Job One



"We provide a ball repair tool and an information card to our golfing guests." - Roy Wilshire, CGCS.

When it comes to ball marks, our number-one focus is always on education. We take extra care to share with outside groups that have special events at the Grasslands C.C. about

the importance of properly repairing ball marks on the greens. We provide a ball-repair tool and an information card to our golfing guests. For our members, we put reminders in our newsletters whenever the problem seems to be getting out of hand. We don't have a formal maintenance routine for ball-mark repairs, since we rely on our members to police themselves.

As far as divots go, I'm pretty proud of how well versed the members are at leaving a level, filled divot and not a pile of sand. We have buckets of green dyed sand on our carts and for our small group of walkers we have small lightweight containers that fit on their pull carts. Overall they do a pretty good job of keeping up the divots and they understand the importance to the appearance and enjoyment of the round for everyone.

Royal Poinciana Club Greens Mowers Do Double Duty



"We just schedule the manpower to get it done." - Matt Taylor, GCS

In our operating plan, ball-mark repairs are a staff responsibility first thing in the morning. Using the ball-mark-repair tool by Standard, our greens

Ball Marks - The Magnitude of the Problem

Editors Note: The following is an article and photo from "Black Diamond Happenings," the club newsletter from the Black Diamond Ranch in Lecanto. Superintendent John Cunningham was frankly amazed by the sheer number of ball marks. It took four or five workers several trips to the range to get enough golf balls to place on the visible ball marks in various stages of recovery or disrepair.



"From The Green..."

What actually happens when a ball mark is not properly repaired?

1. Soil is exposed, so the area immediately surrounding the ball dries up faster than it would if the ball marks were repaired and thus a blemish is left on the green.
2. There is also a change that the raised turf caused by the ball will dry quickly and may die out.
3. The open soil invites weed invasion, such as crabgrass or Poa annua.
4. The unrepaired ball mark will leave a "bumpy" spot in the green. When a ball mark is neglected by a golfer it then is scalped the next morning by a mower which remains for many days.

From an agronomic viewpoint, a ball mark bruises the grass plant and severely damages

No. 4 Green Quarry Course at Black Diamond Ranch. Each golf ball represents one ball mark. There were approximately 1,200 identifiable marks on this green on Jan. 7. We continually try to fix and sand ball marks during our morning tasks. Topdressing will also help fill some of those blemishes. If you are already fixing ball marks, please make sure your playing partners are also.

the growing point of the plant. Turf recovery must then take place from the perimeter of the damaged area, which will take a considerable amount of time.

The correct way to repair a ball mark is to stretch the turf back over the bruised area from the edges. After the mark has been repaired "pat" the area down with your putter. What takes 15 seconds to fix, could take 30 days to heal if not fixed properly.

Proper etiquette demands that each golfer repair his/her own ball marks before walking off the green. The damage caused by unrepaired ball marks is no small matter. Ball marks must be repaired almost immediately in order for them to heal properly.

See you on the course,

John P. Cunningham, GCS

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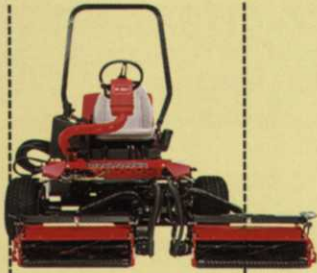
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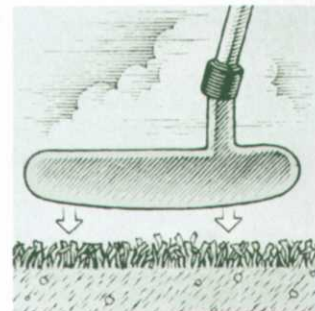
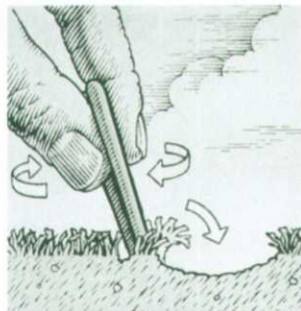
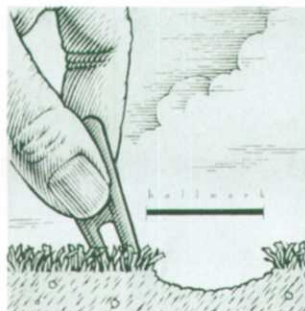
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The Proper Way to Repair a Ball Mark

- 1** Use a prolonged ball mark repair tool (preferably), knife, key or tee.
- 2** Insert at the edges of the mark—not the middle of the depression.
- 3** Bring the edges together with a gentle twisting motion, but don't lift the center. Try not to tear the grass.
- 4** Smooth the surface with a club or foot. You're done when it's a surface that you would putt over.



Source: Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

This high-resolution ball-mark-repair guide can be downloaded from the GCSAA Web site.

mowers walk the greens, repairing ball marks before they mow the greens. We do promote golfer etiquette in the club newsletter, and post notices and put announcements on carts and some golfers do a great job of following through, but others don't. Instead of standing around complaining about ball marks, we just schedule the manpower to get it done. Most members may not be aware that we take the extra time to do this, but we think it's important to make sure the greens are ready to go first thing.

Our course set-up man takes care of filling divots on the course as he moves the tee blocks to the new positions for the day. We have sand buckets available on the Par 3 tees so the golfers can help fill divots on the tee tops. The set-up man also checks and repairs divots on short par-4 holes and the third shot areas on par 5s where short irons are frequently used. These chronic spots can have some unfilled divots, especially when we have lots of play during the season. We double-check par-3 tees on Friday to clean them up as much as possible for the weekend.

We have sand buckets on all the golf carts and sand bottles that fit in special brackets that fit on pull carts for our fairly large number of walking golfers.

WCI Communities' Venetian Golf & River Club

Ball Marks Aren't a Problem



"With no heavy organic layer, the greens aren't marking up." - Mike Miles, GCS

Actually we don't have any real bad ball marks on our new greens. The only thing I can think of is the straight sand construction with only porous

ceramic amendments and no organics. We don't have a soft organic layer to gash like I've seen on former courses. I know there are tradeoffs using straight sand profiles, but with 40 inches of rain this summer, it hasn't been a bad thing.

As far as divots go, we use green sand. We don't put out sand buckets on the par-3 tees. With five sets of tees on every hole, it doesn't make too much sense. The golf carts have sand buckets for golfers to use on fairway divots, and I have to say that they get the majority of them. The rangers also help with divots, which is a big help too. We backfill and topdress tee divots on non-mow days and do the practice tee every other day.

Waterlefe G.C.

No Room on the Practice Tee

"I wish golfers wouldn't use the sod cutter method." - David Williamson, GCS

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