

At Braelinn, traffic cops need not apply

ON THE GREEN

BY RANDY WAYNE WILSON

Golf car traffic control is a major headache for many superintendents, particularly when their course has a tendency to stay wet long after the rain has stopped.

Traditional methods to steer cars away from easily damaged wet areas involve ropes and stakes. But ropes and stakes suffer at the hands of both maintenance crew and golfers.

The unfortunate rope stakes are often run over by players, blamed for bad shots, and left strewn across the fairway. Maintenance workers often remove stakes in order to mow or spray and, lacking a hammer, have difficulty reinserting them in the original position. As a result stakes are sometimes disfigured and left leaning at crazy angles.

In this era of heightened course grooming standards, an unsightly, bent, rusty, non-uniform rope stake does not reflect well on the superintendent.

Mike Wilson, superintendent at Braelinn Golf Club in Peachtree City, Ga., has implemented an inexpensive, attractive method to solve the rope stake dilemma. After observing drainage patterns and trouble areas, Wilson sunk PVC sleeves in the designated stake position.

He did this by driving in a steel pipe and removing it, replacing it with a 1-1/4 inch schedule 40 PVC sleeve 10 inches long, to just below ground level. Next, a painted length of 1-inch diameter PVC pipe with a tee glued on top, is inserted into the sleeve.

The player or crew member can easily lower and replace the stake speedily. This method maintains a uniform, professional appearance and removes that "cluttered" look. Out-of-bounds and hazard markers can be installed in a similar way, allowing for cleaner mowing and trimming around lakes.

Entry-exit problem

Wilson uses a method designed to eliminate another car traffic-related problem.

Golf cars naturally seek the same entry and exit points to and from the fairway. To avoid massive kill in these "entry-exit" points,



Photos by Randy Wayne Wilson

At left, Mike Wilson aligns a removable rope stake at Braelinn Golf Club in Peachtree City, Ga. Above, he places a traffic bump on a golf car path to keep cars off the turf.

Wilson positions rounded cement traffic bumps in key places to vary the car patterns. The difference between these and others is the portability; like Wilson's rope stakes, the traffic bumps are removeable for trimming, traffic variation, or seasonal adjustment.

To construct these innovative little turf-savers, choose a plastic bowl with a shape that fits your design. Grease the bowl lightly before pouring cement.

Wilson recommends mixing a dye in the cement, rather than painting the surface. If the bump is chipped, it will still retain a uniform appearance.

Wilson prefers a dye offered by L.M. Schofield Co. called Chromix-Earth Red. The muted earth tones blend well with natural

landscape.

After greasing the bowl (for easy removal), pour in dyed cement. At approximately 15 minutes, insert a 6-inch spike roughly 1 to 1-1/2 inches into the mixture.

Wilson advises placing the spikes in salt water 24 hours beforehand, because the cement adheres more readily to a rusty surface than a clean one.

At this point, select the area you need to discourage cars from entering or exiting the fairway and drill a hole in the cart path to a 4-inch depth.

Wilson reports excellent results with a portable drill outfitted with a 5/16-inch masonry bit.

Traffic bump spacing can be left to your individual preference. It normally only re-

quires one encounter with the traffic bump for even the most aggressive car pilot to reform.

These low-profile measures will not solve all the problems a superintendent faces, but by taming a recurring problem, the efficiency-minded turf manager is free to concentrate on more pressing matters.

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