

Curious about conspicuous colors? USGA has a handle on it

By TERRY BUCHEN

Yellow, not red, is the most conspicuous color, black the least, surveys show.

It was interesting to watch the recent U.S. Senior Open on television with the blue- and yellow-checked flag, the U.S. Golf Association Centennial logo in the center, mounted on an eight-foot yellow flagstick made of fiberglass.

A similar flag has been used the past two years on the Senior PGA Tour, only the flags are black- and yellow-checked and there usually is no logo.

"We tested the yellow-checked flag in 1993 for one year to see if the senior players could see it better, with the green background of the putting surface plus the many clothing colors of the gallery behind and on either side of the green. The players seemed to observe it better than a plain yellow flag, which is our tournament specs for the PGA and Nike Tours," said Allan MacCurrach, senior agronomist for all three tours.



This year's U.S. Senior Open used the yellow/blue checkered flag, with the USGA logo in the center, similar to the one shown below. Above is the checkered flag now used exclusively on the Senior PGA Tour.



"Prior to the checkered flags, we tested painting the bottom three to four feet of the yellow eight-foot fiberglass a black color to aid in depth perception for players, with mixed to good results. Since we tested the checkered flag, we have stayed with it exclusively the past two years and have not painted the bottom of the flagsticks anymore," MacCurrach added.

"Back in the 1970s we tested every possible flag and flagstick color combination and found that an eight-foot versus a seven-foot flagstick painted bright yellow was the easiest to see.

"The added one foot in height greatly added to a player's depth perception and also was easier to see with the gallery surrounding the putting surface."

ANY COLOR, LONG AS IT'S BLACK

It is greatly appreciated that drainage grate manufacturers are increasingly making the plastic round, rectangular and square grates in the color black. Green is the standard color. They almost never blend in with the surround-

ing fairway or rough grass, which makes them quite conspicuous.

Superintendents who have "made the switch" to black-colored grates are quite pleased with the results, as they do not stand out very much and are aesthetically pleasing to the golfing elite. On the edges of asphalt cart paths, many superintendents are using black-colored channel drains immediately next to the path. They blend in exceedingly well, as well as being quite functional.

Channel drains that are used in

landscape maintenance are many times colored an earth-tone scheme to blend in better with mulch and bark of a similar color.

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU TODAY?

One of the most fun public-relations ideas I have used over the years is when a golfer asks specific questions about their home lawn, annual or perennial flower garden, and trees and shrubs.

I usually give them the usual in-person answers and then fol-

low it up with a letter and photocopies that are pulled out of the files, specifically answering their questions.

Examples include sending tree and shrub spec sheets about transplanting, feeding, watering, perennial flower identification, color photocopies and growing recommendations, how to have the best home lawn on the block, etc.

The most fun aspect of this little extra effort is that the golfer is not expecting to receive

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this written information, which makes them even more appreciative of this good will done by the superintendent.

It's amazing how happy this makes a golfer at your course.



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