

UCal-Riverside traffic simulator bodes well for turfgrass research

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — The new putting green traffic simulator developed here at the University of California, Riverside (UCR) mimics the wear and tear caused by golfers' shoes, fine-tunes researchers' recommendations, and will lead to improvements in putting green turf playability, according to UCR turf researchers.

Because 200 rounds of golf per day leave an estimated 61,766,000 spike marks in the turf, trueness of the putting green surface is a major issue among golfers. UCR's metal-cleated simulator has its first job at the Desert Horizons Country Club in Indian Wells and is creating uniform wear over the entire test plot.

"Depending on the number of passes per week, the simulator can deliver low, moderate, or high traffic to mimic the playing conditions on any golf course," said Robert Green, UCR turfgrass research agronomist. "Since the amount of play influences how much punishment cleats deliver to turf, accounting for the traffic variable is critical to making recommendations that fit real golf course needs."

Most university research greens do not have traffic on them, unless a practice putting green doubles as a research plot, Green said.

The new putting green traffic simulator facilitates fine-tuning cultural practice recommendations, Green said.

"We designed the apparatus initially to mimic the destruction caused by metal-spiked golf shoes, but it can be modified easily to mimic 'alternative-spiked' shoes," said Steve Cockerham, superintendent, UCR Agricultural Operations.

Alternative-spiked shoes, which have small plastic cleats for traction rather than steel spikes, are gaining popularity among golfers and golf courses, because they cause low turf damage compared to metal-spiked shoes.

In the trade, metal spikes have been called the "metallic mashers of monocots."

The simulator can yield uniform turf wear data for metal-spiked or alternative-spiked shoes, depending on its configuration, Cockerham said. The apparatus was built using the frame of a walk-behind mower.

At Desert Horizons Country Club, superintendent Lane Stave and his staff are applying the traffic treatments and determining the number of passes per week that resemble the moderate traffic delivered by metal-cleated golfers. Stave and his staff recently named the simulator the "Blue Beast."

Because cleat traffic can affect the competitive relationship

among turf species, the simulator will yield representative wear for evaluating the effect of fall renovation practices on the spring transition back to Bermudagrass from an overseeded perennial ryegrass-*Poa trivialis* mixture at the Desert Horizons Country Club, Green said.

The new apparatus has been

unveiled by the UCR Turfgrass Research Advisory Committee.

UCRTRAC provides a formal link between the University of California and the turfgrass industries in Southern California. Member organizations represent golf course superintendents, sod producers, general turfgrass interests, professional

golfers, and UCR researchers with expertise in turf improvement, physiology, and culture. UCRTRAC addresses the research and educational needs of member organizations.

The Hi-Lo Desert Golf Course Superintendents Association is sponsoring Green's research at Desert Horizons Country Club.

GASPER EARNS CERTIFICATION

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — John Gasper of Oak Hill Country Club, has been designated a certified golf course superintendent by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA). Gasper, who came to Oak Hill last year, joins 1,600 golf course superintendents in the country who hold CGCS status.

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