

## In Texas, two greens are better than one

**W**hat can be done when golf course greens are struggling to grow in, resulting in less than desirable playing conditions?

How about creating a second set of greens?

That's how management of Willow Springs Golf Course approached the problem. The family-owned course outside of Fort Worth, Texas, experienced difficulties with a Tifgreen Bermudagrass grow-in, so the grounds management crew started fresh with a new set of Bermudagrass greens.

One set of greens is used in the summer and the other in the winter. Although the approach had its costs up front, the long-term effects have made it worthwhile, says golf course superintendent Troy Golden.

"The course lies out a little differently (every six months), so members enjoy the change," he says. "Some are laid out side-by-side, and others are separated by a sand trap. A hole might be par 4 in the summer, but have a different setup and be a par 3 in the winter."

Additionally, maintenance is

easier and less disruptive when there are two sets of greens.

"We can do cultural practices such as aerification to the greens we're not using," he says. "We never have downtime because of major agronomic practices."

The summer greens maintenance routine usually starts in March, when the crew aerifies and verticuts them. After the greens heal, they're included in the regular routine with the winter greens.

"We ride-mow all our greens, so it's not that big of an extra effort," he says. "As soon as

the summer greens are in good condition (usually in May) and I have ability to water and fertilize them more, we open them for summer."

Another advantage is that if one course's greens aren't at an acceptable quality, the crew can switch to the other set so golfers almost always find favorable course conditions. This ability has given Willow Springs an advantage when nearby courses have had trouble keeping greens in top form.

For example, Golden says that when nearby courses are losing



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money because of transition problems, rounds at Willow Springs increase. But despite the increase, the course doesn't suffer from the problems usually associated with heavy play.

"We average 44,000 to 56,000 rounds per year, but on two greens, just divide that in half because golfers are only on greens for half a year," Golden says. "You don't have to battle the constant wear problem that most courses do."

Golden doesn't have the expenses associated with employing a huge grounds maintenance crew; he employs about four in the winter and six in the summer.

"It's more work a couple months out of the year, but for

the most part, it's just normal maintenance," he says.

Golden doesn't know of any other courses that have dual greens and guesses some might be deterred by the initial cost associated with installing a second set. But, he adds, if a major architect tried it on a course, the concept probably would catch on quickly and spread to other courses.

Another consideration that should convince superintendents about the concept is that there's always a plan B.

"I sleep better at night because I have job security," he says. "If something goes wrong, if there's a catastrophe on the greens, I have a backup." — HW

## Association heads cite teamwork as main factor of show's success

The official numbers weren't out at press time, but the heads of the three partnering organizations that hosted the Golf Industry Show say early results point to success, especially with educational conferences.

"The feedback has been 100-percent positive," says Steve Mona, c.e.o. of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

The GCSAA, the Golf Course Owners Association of America and, for the first time, the Club Managers Association of Amer-

ica hosted the trade show and individual education conferences Feb. 19 through 27 in Anaheim, Calif., and promoted the need for teamwork.

Show-related numbers, provided before the show ended, indicated the attendance reached 23,000 — the highest of the three GIS events that have been held. The number of exhibitors, which has reached about 700 in previous years, was on track to reach 1,000 this year, according to the GCSAA. Mona cites the addition

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