

A path to follow

Wear areas made by golfers following the same line are common turf problems for supers everywhere. If you re-turf the area it looks good for a week. Roping off the area looks ugly and gets in the way of play. And redirecting traffic just moves the wear to another area. However, GCI's agent at work in the Land Down Under reports a possible solution.

"We have one area, a crossing between the bunkers on the 8th which has been a major problem since our bunker upgrade two years ago," says Peter Daly, superintendent at The McLeod Country Golf Club in Brisbane, Australia. "It is a high traffic area that funnels the traffic through a narrow pathway to and from the green. Consequently, any work done would soon be pounded into the ground."

Daly considered widening the crossing, but he believed a new track would be created as everyone tends to walk on the same line. Recently he came across Grassprotecta, a new product from Geofabrics. It is a heavy-duty and UV-stabilized grass protection mesh. The idea is to lay it on top of the turf and allow the turf to grow up through the mat creating a very strong stable surface. The mesh is designed so you can play a golf shot off it, and it will distribute the wear of the high amounts of foot traffic over the whole of the grid.

"The original path was dug away with all turf and topsoil removed, we shaped the sub soil surface to distribute any water into both bunkers to use that as drainage," he says. "We then brought in sand to widen and lift the crossing. This was put down in layers and packed tight, then another layer put on and packed and so on until the right height and width was achieved.

"We then repacked the bunker faces and topped with bunker sand and packed this as well, thus helping support the actual crossing. This was also done in layers. The area was watered and turf laid over the crossing. Then the Grassprotecta was laid out, cut to shape and then pegged down. We let the turf take root and grow through the grid."

Well, five weeks later and the area is back in use. Daly is amazed at how well the matting distributes the wear. And once the turf grew through it was impossible to lift the matting. Most importantly, the golfers are happy and Daly even had some play a shot off it with no problems.

"Overall, I think this is a great solution to some of our areas," he adds. "It will be interesting to see this long term and also how it goes through winter as the couch is already slowing down its growth rate. But as a solution to traffic wear problems, the cost wasn't too high and it was easy to put down and get back in play very quickly."



Grassprotecta, a heavy-duty grass protection mesh, lays on top of turf and allows it to grow up through the mat to create a strong, stable surface.

