

Ring around the collar

Three case studies to keep you from tearing up your green collars.

By Katie Tuttle

Greens collars and edges easily get banged up from turning, loading and unloading machinery, and just everyday operation. Once they're damaged, it can be difficult to get them back in solid shape. Whether you're fixing the problem, or just preventing it, here are a few case studies featuring tips and tricks from industry pros to help you make sure your greens look as perfect as possible.

No room for error

Muirfield Village Golf Club

Dublin, Ohio

Paul B. Latshaw – director of grounds operations

18-hole, regulation-length course

Private Non-Equity golf course

72 par – 7,221 yards – 145 slope

By design, the bunkers at Muirfield Village Golf Club in Dublin, Ohio are very close to the putting surfaces. This is done for both strategy and difficulty. Because of this, there is not a lot of room to maneuver a push mower and make turns, thus causing significant damage to the greens. When Superintendent Paul Latshaw arrived at Muirfield, the collars were in pretty bad shape.

“The program started from day one,” he says. The first thing they tried was carpets for the mowers to turn on. The next thing they tried was using a very thin sheet of luan plywood, but it deteriorated quickly when wet, making it not ideal. Now they use a mat similar to the mats now produced by Precision. The mats are 1/8 of an inch and can be stored on racks they built onto their mowers. This allows for easy transportation and saves the time it would take to load and unload the mats every day. The mats help reduce the amount of abrasion that happens on the surfaces when the large machinery is turned and, as of now, it seems to be working.

“The program's working,” Latshaw says, although it does add extra time to the maintenance crew's daily routine. “It probably adds 45 minutes to the greens routes,” he adds. However, the time it saves by preventing the damage makes up for it. “If we didn't use the [mats], our collars would be dead.”

Along with the mats, Muirfield's staff also hand rolls their greens so they're able to stop just short of the collars and avoid more mechanical damage.

“During a tournament you might be triple cutting in the morning and turning on the collar even with mats down, but then with mowing two times at night and rolling, collars get beat to death,” Latshaw says.

A third technique Muirfield uses to prevent greens damage is to overseed with a little perennial ryegrass

“It doesn't look as great but it's able to withstand the mechanical stresses more,” Latshaw says.

