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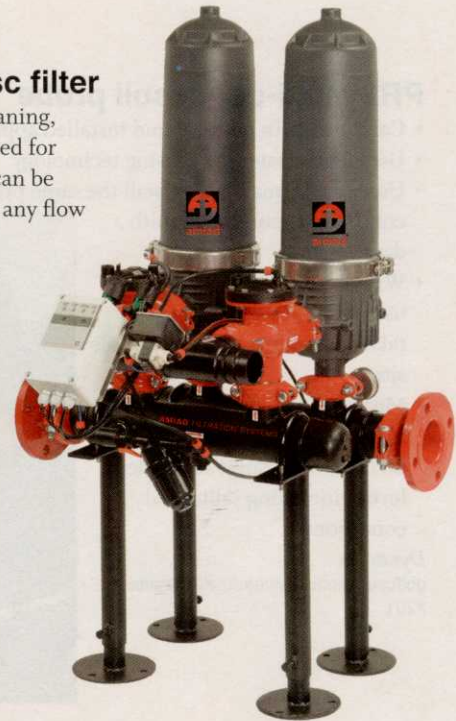
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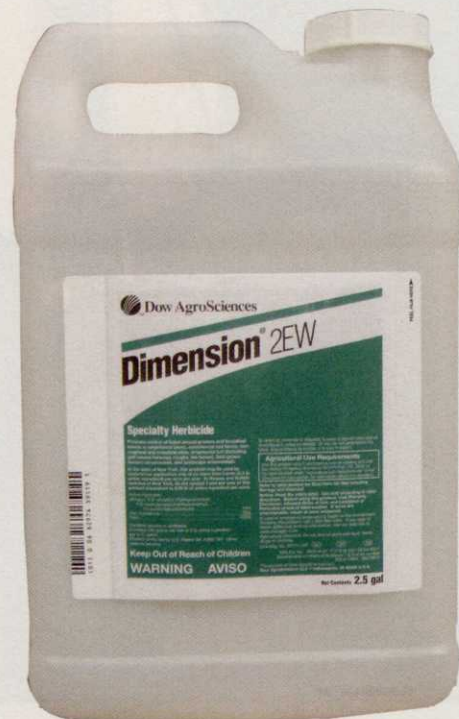


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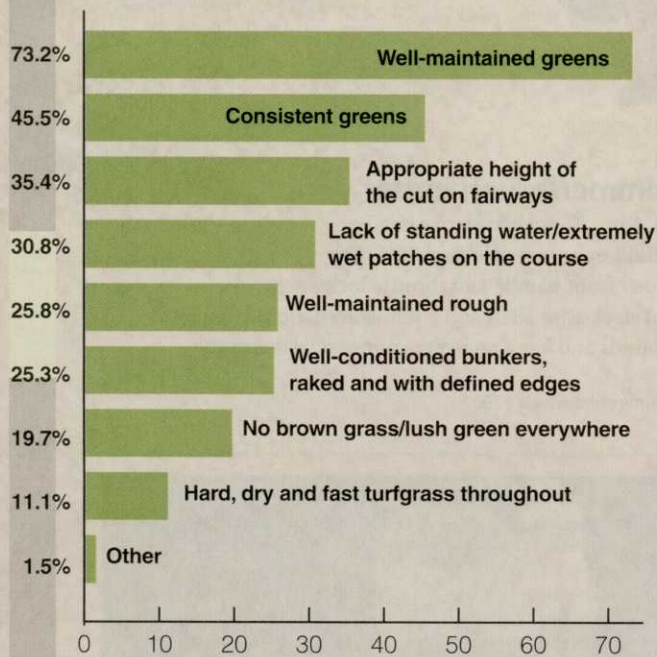
WHAT ARE THOSE CRAZY GOLFERS THINKING?

At times, the relationship between golf course superintendents and golfers can be frustrating to say the least. Golfer complaints about bunker consistency and green speed are on one side, not replacing divots and a lack of understanding about course maintenance/operations are on the other. Slow play can be considered a gripe of both sides.

Below are charts containing information that shed light on what golfers think about golf courses and the golfing experience. Superintendents, especially at public golf facilities, can use this type of information to better understanding golfers at their facilities. Ultimately, this can improve a facility's bottom line.

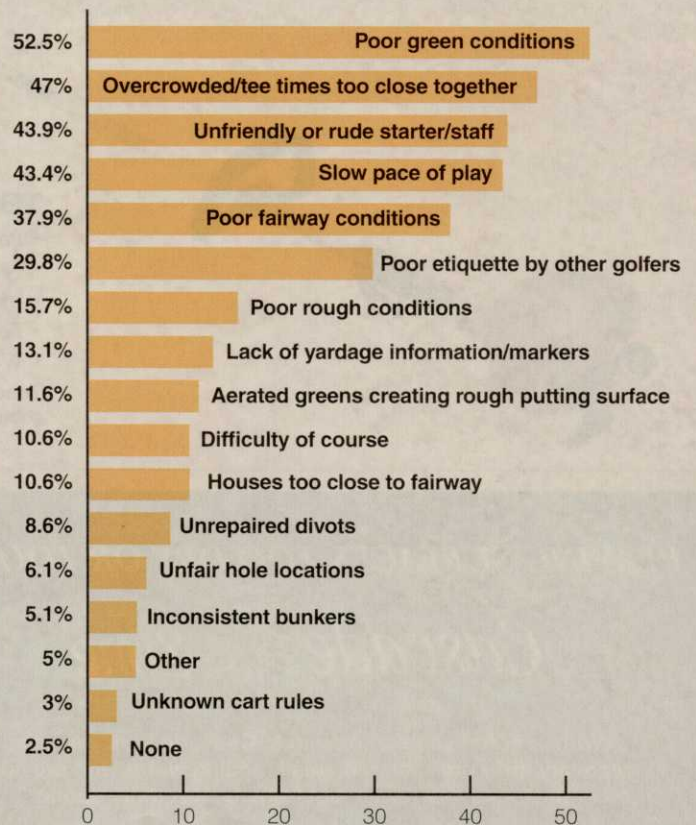
A random sample of 200 golfers throughout the country were surveyed by InsightExpress, a market research company. Golfers surveyed play at least five rounds a year.

What do you look for in a well-conditioned golf course?



Total responses: 198 (multiple responses allowed)

What characteristics of a golf experience make you less likely to return to a particular course?



Total responses: 198 (multiple responses allowed)

Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 38-year and AA life member of the GCSAA. He can be reached at terrybuchen@earthlink.net.



A divot fix

The TPC Boston in Norton, Mass., is a popular venue that generates a lot of play and hosts the annual Deutsche Bank Championships on the PGA Tour. Golf course superintendent Tom Brodeur thought of a way to build two different fairway divot repair tools. Chris Hunt, equipment service manager, and Ron Terfry, assistant equipment service manager and inventor of the tools, assisted.

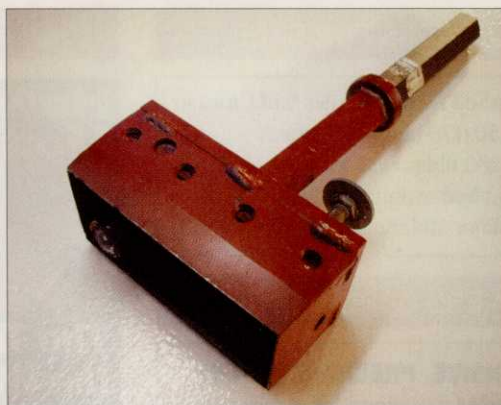
The TPC Boston's fairways are built on a heavy clay, rocky soil. There are numerous low spots golf balls funnel into, resulting in many concentrated fairway divots that must be repaired before the nationally televised event.

The first step is to use the divot outlining tool (top picture), which is 4.5 feet tall and has three-quarter-inch-diameter, hollow steel T handles welded in place. On the bottom of the divot outlining tool is a plugging tool made of used John Deere 180 bedknives the size of a dollar bill. The plugging tool is pounded into the soil an inch and a half deep.

The silver-colored slide hammer, which has a cut-off moil point bit, slides up and down inside the 1.5-inch-diameter, hollow steel shaft (weighing 50 pounds total) to pound the rectangular shaped bedknives into the clay soil. The bedknives are welded flush into place onto a block of notched steel. There are two half-inch-diameter holes drilled on either end of the block for three-eighths-inch-diameter bolts. One-inch diameter washers are welded on both ends of the bolts that slide back and forth to extract the divot.

The divot-outlining tool is used to outline divots on fairways and at the fairway turf nursery to prepare for removal of old divots and new turf with the divot-grabber tool (bottom picture).

The divot grabber tool has two handles made of 1.5-inch-by-one-quarter-inch square tubing that's 5-feet long and welded together. It weighs 15 pounds. The divot grabber tool is operated much like a post-hole digger in which the handles are moved outward to extract the divot after it's outlined with the divot outline tool. The handles have a guide bar made of 1-inch-by-1-inch square tubing so the bedknives are kept in a parallel position before they move inwards to extract the divot. The divot grabber tool also uses used John Deere 180 bedknives that are welded in place.



Travels With Terry

Globetrotting consulting agronomist Terry Buchen visits many golf courses annually with his digital camera in-hand. He will share helpful ideas relating to maintenance equipment from the golf course superintendents he visits – as well as a few ideas of his own – with timely photos and captions that explore the changing world of golf course management.

Mount it

At The Estancia Club in Scottsdale, Ariz., Michael Mongiello, CGCS, director of agronomy, and Brian Porcelli, operations manager, figured out a good way to transport a Spray Hawk walk-behind sprayer around the course by mounting it onto a Toro Multi Pro sprayer.

Mounting the walk-behind sprayer on the front of the Multi Pro sprayer worked best using two 2-inch-by-2-inch pieces of square tubing 6 inches long and welding them to the front steel bumper. The tubing was primed and painted black to match the original bumper color. Holes were drilled for three-eighths-inch-diameter bolts 3-inches long. The tubing was bolted in place and a 2-inch-diameter flat washer was welded on top of the bolt on each piece of square tubing, which holds the inside of the Spray Hawk axles onto the front bumper and keeps the walk-behind sprayer from moving in any direction. A one-quarter-inch-by-30-inch-long chain with quick disconnect clips also were used to keep the walk-behind sprayer in place while transporting it around the course.

The materials cost about \$25, and the labor took about an hour and a half. **GCI**



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(LETTERS continued from page 8)

ary to the general manager. If you read the cover story, hopefully you'll understand this. The intent was to get input from various members of management teams at several golf facilities about the importance of practice facilities.

To capture this visually, we wanted to photograph the director of agronomy and the general manager of the Estancia Club on the cover with a practice facility as the backdrop. The director of agronomy wasn't placed in the background because of his profession or title. It was an artistic decision made by the photographer to show depth to create an interesting cover. Cover art shouldn't be mistaken for editorial opinion, and you shouldn't read too much into it.

Other questions arise about this topic: Why are superintendents so sensitive about small things like this? If the roles were reversed, would general managers, who are among our readers, write the same letters?

The g.m./superintendent relationship signi-

fies the importance of management teams making decisions. GCI's objective is to provide a wide range of information that will help golf facilities, as a whole, succeed. The superintendent may be the main target audience, but assistant superintendents all the way up to owners also are part of that operational success. We'll continue to report on and analyze that.

GCI's role in the market is to cover the entire golf business. Take a look at this month's cover (which was done well before we started getting these letters) to see how the magazine thinks the future of the business is shaping up. Teamwork is the key, and sometimes one member of the team is out in front of the others.

Thanks for your comments, and keep reading.

John Walsh
Editor

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Pat Jones is president of Flagstick LLC, a consulting firm that provides sales and marketing intelligence to green-industry businesses. He can be reached at psjhawk@cox.net or 440-478-4763.

CURMUDGEONLY THOUGHTS

Frankly, I'm pissed off right now. There seems to be a lull in the industry at the moment ... and editorial columnists despise lulls. Here's what I mean:

- None of the idiot/millionaire PGA Tour pros has said anything incredibly stupid about Stimpmeter readings lately.
- The GCSAA's PDI launch last summer turned out to be more of a whimper than a bang.
- The big show site in Anaheim might not be the most dynamic place to visit, but it's just not as much fun to heap abuse on as Atlanta or Dallas.
- Despite dire predictions, the golf economy continues to not crash and burn.
- I'm bored to death with the whole "new club and ball technology is killing golf" debate.
- Hell, the Democrats didn't even make banning turf pesticides one their legislative priorities in their first 100 hours of running Congress.
- Worst of all, Johnny Miller turned out to be a genuinely likable guy when I interviewed him several months ago. He loves fishing, for God's sake! We actually compared notes about the joys of chasing Northern Pike in the Great White North. Oh, the humanity!

It's pretty depressing being the industry's designated curmudgeon right now. So I'll take things into my own hands and fling some feces at the fan by posing five tough questions:

1. The GCSAA claims to represent the interests of our industry in Washington, D.C. It has several full-time staffers dedicated to government relations, and it pays a large annual sum to a hired lobbying firm to get things done inside the Beltway. Yet, there are basically zero dollars of federal funding for turfgrass research designated for our university programs. Golf is supposedly a \$62 billion business in the United States, and we hear various enormous numbers about the economic impact of turf, but

we get nothing back for all the tax revenues we generate and the contributions we make to society. Why?

2. The PGA Tour has bet the farm – and the visibility of our industry – on the Golf Channel. I make my living in this business, and I couldn't find the Golf Channel on my cable system if my life depended on it. Remember when the Senior Tour used to be on regular network TV a lot? As I recall, that was before the Tour sold television rights for the renamed Champions Tour to Nick at Nite, or was it QVC? When's the last time you accidentally stumbled across

"The days of pros, superintendents and club managers working in their own little kingdoms without cooperation or coordination have come to an end if the facility is to survive."

a Champions Tour event on TV? That's what we have to look forward to with this new Golf Channel deal. It's like a federal witness relocation program for televised golf tournaments. The Tour's new motto should be: "These Guys Are Hidden." What are Tim Finchem and his overpaid geniuses smoking down in Florida?

3. I'm fed up with hearing about the slump in the golf market. When will facilities start taking responsibility for their own business success? Every time I give a speech at a golf conference, I ask for a show of hands about how many attendees have formal, written marketing plans. About nine hands out of a hundred usually are raised. Ask the same question at any other meeting of small businesspeople

and damned near every hand will go up. If you're an owner who's just waiting around for the market to rebound on its own and hoping that it will somehow trickle down to you, it's time to sell your property to a condo developer. Why do so many facilities let the business manage them instead of managing the business?

4. I've also had it with the Rodney Dangerfield "I get no respect" routine I hear too often from some superintendents. If you're sitting around waiting for someone in Lawrence, Kan., to magically make golfers recognize that you're a professional, you better find a comfy chair because you'll be sitting for a long time. Not that the GCSAA isn't trying. (It keeps talking about vague plans for a big public relations campaign on the Golf Channel. Oops, see above.) But any superintendent who isn't taking his own image and his own career into his own hands is kidding himself. When will these whiners realize their challenges are no different than any other manager at any other business and no one else is going to solve their problems for them?

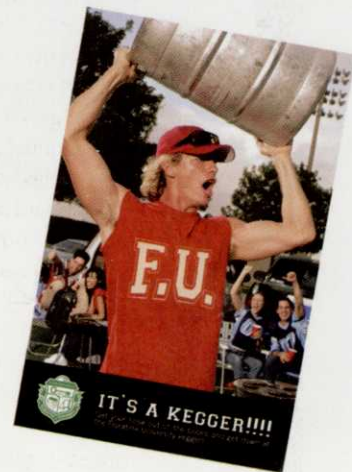
5. Finally, when will clubs start tearing down the walls that separate the different departments. I'm constantly amazed when I meet a golf professional who has no clue whatsoever about the maintenance program. Or, I'll meet a superintendent who's only barely aware that food-and-beverage operations impact the bottom line. When you ask members of the management team about membership growth or rounds development, they'll say, "Lisa in the sales department handles that." The days of pros, superintendents and club managers working in their own little kingdoms without cooperation or coordination have to come to an end if the facility is to survive. As Benjamin Franklin said, "We must all hang together, or most assuredly, we will all hang separately." Thus, why do so few facilities make teamwork a priority?

OK, I'm still pissed, but at least I've had some fun. I posed several questions and didn't manage to answer any. That's what curmudgeonly columnists do. We have that luxury. You don't. **GCI**

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