



*Come April, there you are on the first tee,
surrounded by blue sky, green grass, budding
trees, gentle winds, and to add the touch
supreme—red bunkers*

By Art Spander

Much of the joy of golf—if, indeed, there is any joy in golf—is that it enables man to get close to nature.

Were it not for the opportunity to kick a ball out of sand traps now and then, some people would never know the feel of sand beneath their toes.

But if 3M Company has its way, all this, too, may end.

Not content—if you'll pardon the expression—to stick to the manufacture of transparent tape, 3M has developed what it feels is a superior replacement for sand.

It's called Scotch-Rok, and is not to be confused with scotch on the rocks, which will never be replaced.

Scotch-Rok costs \$15 a ton—people would drink to that if scotch sold at a comparable price. And it comes in 30 colors ranging from beige to turquoise.

Scotch-Rok is fractured rock granules fired at high temperatures to infuse the colored ceramic coating. Pigments are inorganic to re-

sist any fading from sun, rain and chemicals.

Until the Bob Hope Desert Classic in February, Scotch-Rok was in use at only one course, Belvedere CC, of Hot Springs, Ark. But at the Hope Classic, the crystals were placed in bunkers on the back nine of Indian Wells CC, south of Palm Springs, so television audiences could view them in living color and compatible black and white.

Officials placed red Scotch-Rok in bunkers of the par-five holes, blue on the par-fours and white on the par-threes. If you're going to spend money, you might as well do it patriotically.

"I was in all three colors of traps," said Bob Charles, the left handed pro from New Zealand. "I hit spectacular shots out of the blue and white traps, but I was terrible out of the red. They've got to get rid of the red ones."

Charles spoke tongue in cheek, of course.

Continued on page 43



"Actually," smiled Charles, "I saw little difference between them and sand."

That may be bad or good for 3M, depending on your view.

The firm claims Scotch-Rok is more consistent than sand, thus "all traps play the same."

According to publicity about the new product, "the club head passes through the granules more easily than through sand, making it easier for the duffer to come out of a trap."

Possibly that was Charles' problem. He's no duffer.

Another claim of the manufacture is that a ball, when it lands in a trap, "tends to hit and stop on the new granules and will not bury itself as it sometimes does in sand."

The claim was disputed by Gay Brewer, the 1967 Masters champion. "The stuff is terrible," said Brewer. "I couldn't explode. The group we played with had the ball bury several times."

Brewer's complaint, however, was one of very few.

"I saw no difference between them and sand," said Arnold Palmer. "They say it will not stick together if it gets wet, but I'll have to see it in the rain to find out if it really doesn't hold water."

Other tournament pros were by-and-large favorable in their judgments of the brightly-colored traps. Julius Boros, GOLF Magazine's All-America sand wedge player and the pro generally acclaimed the outstanding sand player on the tournament circuit said, "I like them (the traps). I especially like the texture. I had no problems at all on any of my shots out of them."

Celebrity amateur Don Adams, belying predicaments that beset his television alter ego, Maxwell Smart, played down the amount of bunker trouble he had. "I didn't get into many. They did add color to the tournament," he observed in his best secret agent style.

Tournament pro golf fashion plate Doug Sanders remarked with an eye to the increasing consciousness of color, "They add a lot of

color to the game. I wasn't in one," he continued with some joy, "but they seem to play well."

Dave Marr, Professional Golfers' Assn. player's president said, "They'll be all right. It's a matter of getting used to them after 20-odd years of looking at white-sand traps. I didn't get in one so I can't comment about texture."

Winner of the Hope Classic, Billy Casper, was another of the tournament pros denied the chance to try blasting out of the brightly-colored bunkers. "I never hit one, so I don't really know," was his reply to a query about his like or dislike of the colored sand. Perhaps his remark can be better understood when it is pointed out that Casper missed the green only twice on his final 18 holes and didn't record a single bogey in his last 36.

George Walsh, PGA field representative in charge of play at Indian Wells, said, "I'd say at least eight of every 10 of the pros liked it. Those who didn't seemed to have trouble with a shot or two, and many of the

bad shots were the result of bad lies in the trap—under the lip and on the downslope for instance. I think this is a psychological thing. The ball doesn't bury in these traps," he added.

Lee Trevino, U.S. Open champion, triple-bogeyed the par-three 13th hole at Indian Wells when he blasted completely over the green, chipped poorly and three-putted. But jolly Lee was candid in assessing this misfortune, "It wasn't any problem with the rock. I just hit a lousy shot." Then effervescent as ever he added, "They're great! They don't hold water, which is the big thing, but you do have to get used to them."

And former star Cary Middlecoff, doing the television announcing behind the 18th green, was enthusiastic. "I saw every group come in Saturday and Sunday to the 18th green," said Middlecoff. "A lot of people—particularly the amateurs—hit into the traps. But I saw only one ball bury itself in the bunker."

Nature was never like that. □

How soon will color blossom at other courses?

The sports public's desire for national events and contests beamed over the television networks has been given a further russet flush of passion with the widening use of color television sets and the almost universal programming of major sports events in color.

Golf's share of viewers has been increasing dramatically as the audience that watches the finishes of the big-money tournaments grows and grows. The natural beauty of golf courses at which tournaments are held has been an asset for color television. The lush green of rolling fairways and carpet-like greens has been accented for viewers with the proliferation of color television.

Now it is the turn of the lackluster bunkers to get with color. The bunkers of the last nine holes at Indian Wells CC in Palm Springs

where the network television cameras would pick up the action for broadcasting, were filled with "Scotch-Rok." Players unfortunate enough to land in a bunker found themselves in need of blasting out of a red trap if the hole was a par-five, out of a blue if a par-four and back at the mundane white if a par-three.

It is now only a matter of conjecture as to how soon visions of colored bunkers will begin to dance in the heads of those responsible for innovations at home courses throughout the country. The 3M Company is banking on the impact being felt rather soon. They are standing ready to deliver multi-colored "Scotch-Rok" to those wishing to have bunkers fit for television consumption. It may well be, as some wag remarked, that the impact of television is indeed limitless.