

Bits and Pieces ... and Problems

KNOW THE SOURCES OF FINE SOIL PARTICLES THAT IMPEDE DRAINAGE ON GREENS

You know that greens live and die by their drainage characteristics. Simply put, poorly drained greens are lousy putting surfaces, and well-drained greens are good putting surfaces.

But even the best-draining greens can fall victim to fine soil particles from silt or clay introduced via irrigation or topdressing. Poor drainage leads to disease, poor root growth and greens that can't support a lot of play. All of this adds up to lost business and possibly your job.

So to keep your greens looking good and putting well, you may want to know a few things about the origin of fine soil particles. Here are a few things to consider:

- Your irrigation system could be a source of fine soil particles. Many golf courses have holding lakes for irrigation water, which is pumped through the irrigation system to the



If sand used for topdressing is not washed (right), it could pose problems. Clean sand is on the left.

course. If the pump intake picks up clear water, there's no problem. But if the intake is located near the bottom, it may suck up fine soil particles and carry them to the greens.

- Dirty topdressing is a source of fine soil particles. If the sand used for topdressing is not thoroughly washed, it may be a problem. When a green that has been topdressed with dirty sand is watered, the fine particles wash off the sand and eventually

slow down drainage.

- Organic matter from topdressing is also a source of fine soil particles.

- The uncontrollable natural fallout of particulate matter from the atmosphere also may add fine particles to the green.

The solution: Keep your inputs — water and amendments — clean and your putting surfaces will stay green.

— William Knoop

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