

WET or DRY—

Cascade™ Plus moves water throughout the root zone.

Even in over-saturated or dry root zones, Cascade Plus effectively moves water throughout the turf profile resulting in better playability. In fact, university tests prove that the unique chemistry of Cascade Plus consistently delivers long-lasting improvements in root mass, water efficiency, and turf color and quality. So whether you're contending with hydrophobic soils, localized dry spot, or super-saturated turf, remember that Cascade Plus is the water management tool of choice of superintendents everywhere.

For more information about Cascade Plus or any of our best-of-class turf products, call 800-323-6280 or visit our website at www.precisionlab.com




PRECISION
LABORATORIES, INCORPORATED
Performance Chemistry
for Aquatics and Turf

www.precisionlab.com
©2003 Precision Laboratories, Inc.
Cascade Plus and Cascade Plus Fertilizer are
trademarks of Precision Laboratories, Inc.


Longer Lasting
Water Infiltration


Synchronized Wetting Agent & Fertilizer Technology

Continued from page 30

"The issue is opening up a wider separation between good golfers, and average and bad golfers," Kerman adds.

Skip Lynch, technical agronomist and bentgrass product manager for Seed Research of Oregon in Corvallis, Ore., says today's superintendents are cutting greens at "ridiculously low" mowing heights.

"There's nothing good about fast greens," Lynch says. "If a player says his game is better on fast greens, I'd ask him to prove it."

Tim Moraghan, director of championship agronomy for the USGA, says most golfers have no idea what kind of pressure they're placing on superintendents when they demand fast greens. "Green speed is completely out of control," he adds.

According to a recent survey of superintendents by *Golfdom*, 75 percent of superintendents from private and public courses said green speed is an issue at their courses. Nine percent reported that green speed is so much of an issue that it has led to turf problems.

Most of the players who complain about green speed are single-handicap players with large egos, sources agree. But because they're good players, their voices are heard.

"It's a shame they have such power," Lynch says. "It's minority rule and majority neglect."

One has to look no further than Butler National to see the problems that fast greens can cause on a private course. Butler is a private club with an affluent and all-male membership located about 20 miles west of Chicago. The 32-year-old club, designed by George



"The issue is opening up a wider separation between good golfers, and average and bad golfers."

BILL KERMAN, ARCHITECT
HURDZAN/FRY GOLF COURSE DESIGN

and Tom Fazio, features Penneagle greens.

Sauls says the green-speed issue has grown worse at Butler National in the past five years. He says he's tried to maintain consistent green speeds between 10 and 10.5, but it's a challenge.

"If they're at 11, the members are happy," Sauls says. "If they get below 10, I get chastised."

Sauls says 99 percent of Butler National's members are members at other clubs. Hence, they're always comparing courses — especially

Continued on page 34

Gluttons for Punishment

One of the big problems with green speed is that most golfers, including many pros, don't understand the difference between fast greens and smooth greens, says Skip Lynch, technical agronomist and bentgrass product manager for Seed Research of Oregon in Corvallis, Ore.

Golfers think they want fast greens, but what they really desire are smooth greens that aren't bumpy like a pothole-ridden street after a cold winter, Lynch says. They want greens where their balls glide after being struck.

The problem is they think smooth greens come from mowing them short, which does just the opposite. "The tighter you mow, the more surface imperfections and bumps are going to show," Lynch says.

At Butler National Golf Club, an upscale private course located in Oak Brook, Ill., golfers don't care about smooth greens, says Michael Sauls, the course's superintendent. They want speed, and they love it when Sauls gets the greens running at 11 feet or higher on the

Stimpmeter for club championships and invitationals.

"They're three-putting or four-putting, but they really like the challenge," Sauls says. "The faster I get them, the better they like them. It's scary."

But golfers who don't mind four-putting for the sake of having fast greens are discrediting the sport, Lynch says.

"That type of attitude is one step below a clown's head and a windmill," he says. "That isn't golf."

— L.A., Editor

Sure Thing #1:

**A HAPPY
DOG WAGS
ITS TAIL.**



Living Dangerously

Word on the street is there's a dangerous game of chicken going on between some superintendents. It seems these superintendents, mostly from private clubs, are competing against each other to see whose course can have the fastest greens in town. Larry Aylward comments on this matter in his "Pin High" column on page 10.

Continued from page 32

green speeds. Sauls says members will come to him and tell him the club down the street has greens stimping at 11 feet. And they ask him why Butler National's greens aren't running that high.

"It's a dilemma for me, whether or not the speeds are true speeds or whether or not they're just perceived to be faster," Sauls says. "But when our greens are slower ... that doesn't cut it."

Problem is, when the summer furnace kicks on in Chicago and temperatures soar into the 90s, Sauls is forced to back off the double mowing and rolling so he doesn't damage the greens.

"As soon as I do that, the green speed drops into the upper nines or mid-nines," he says. "That's when all hell breaks loose. I can't go in the clubhouse."

Sauls, who has been at Butler National for 14 years, says the cost of maintaining greens has doubled during his tenure because of increased green speed. It's not a huge cost to his overall budget because the greens only comprise about three acres of the course. But it matters.

Sauls now has six crew members devoted to mowing greens, instead of four members in 1990. The greens are double cut five days a week and rolled the other two days.

"We topdress religiously every two weeks with a light vertical mowing in between," Sauls says. "We use growth regulators every 10 to 14 days."

Sauls says the Penneagle bent doesn't perform well under stress. "But I'm proud of what I've been able to do with this grass — keep the speeds up and keep the *Poa annua* infestation to a minimum."

It's one thing for members to instruct the

superintendent to speed up the greens for the member/guest and the club championship. But it's another thing to expect the superintendent to have the greens stimping between 10 and 11 for the entire golf season. Eventually, the stress placed on the greens over an extended period of time can lead to turf damage, Moraghan warns.

Fast greens can also wreak havoc on superintendents' psyches. Many superintendents agree to increase green speed to appease members because they don't want to end up in the unemployment line.

"They're afraid to speak up because they're afraid of losing their jobs," Lynch says.

The education factor

The bottom line is that superintendents must answer to golfers. Sauls realizes that, but he wasn't afraid to voice his opinion about the dangers of fast greens when members instructed him to make them faster. He also asked his greens chairman to promise not to fire him if the greens died from being overly stressed.

Sometimes, the best thing a superintendent can do is speak up, especially if he feels pressure mounting on him to do something he knows is not the best thing for the turf, Moraghan says.

"The average club member doesn't have the information or education to understand what's required to maintain a golf course," Moraghan says. "We're not Carl Spackler (from *Caddyshack*)— throw a little fertilizer on, water it and cut it. There's a little bit more to it than that."

So it's integral for superintendents to educate members politely about the dangers

Continued on page 36

Fast Greens Handcuff Architects

The greens at the classical courses, with their wonderful waves and wrinkles, can become virtually unputtable if mowed at one-sixteenth of an inch. Alas, if greens keep getting faster, architects will have to design boring, flat oval greens, says Bill Kerman, senior project designer for Hurdzan/Fry Golf Course Design in Columbus, Ohio.

If architects can't design greens with contours, then players won't be able to read them, an essential component of

putting. "Then putting becomes a pure concept of speed control," Kerman says.

Fast greens aren't making the game any easier, and the game desperately needs to be easier to attract more players, says Tim Moraghan, tournament agronomist for the USGA. One can assume that most high-handicap players aren't having fun if they're constantly four-putting and scoring eights because of difficult-playing greens.

"There has to be some kind of reward

for your effort," Moraghan says. "There's nothing better in golf than to be rewarded for making a good shot or making a good putt. But if rewards stop happening, I'm afraid people won't come back."

The common mantra among designers is that they will build courses that are challenging for expert golfers, but playable and forgivable for average golfers, Kerman says. But demands for fast greens are making that difficult for architects to do, he adds.

— L.A., Editor

Sure Thing #2:

CHILDREN WALK THROUGH PUDDLES.

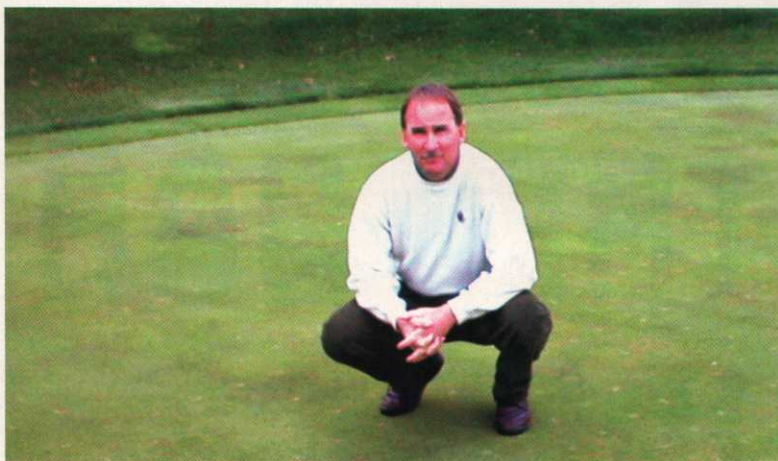


Continued from page 34

of fast greens. But how does one do that?

"In communicating the hazards of green speed, a superintendent has to find the right argument for his target audience," Lynch says.

Superintendents can make the economic argument that fast greens will increase the speed in which money is spent to maintain them, Lynch says. Or they can argue that fast greens will only inflate many golfers' handicaps.



"The members are determined. They want fast greens day in and day out."

**MIKE SAULS, SUPERINTENDENT
BUTLER NATIONAL GOLF CLUB**

"Ask them if their shots are running through greens," Lynch says. "Tailor the argument toward their performances on the golf course."

Another argument is that fast greens lead to more putts that cause slow play and prolonged rounds, Lynch says.

Sometimes, education comes in the form of lost turf caused by stress from managing greens too intensely to keep them fast. But something good could come from such a situation, as in a wake-up call to members. Lost turf at the expense of fast greens might get some members thinking, especially if they lose the course for a month during the replanting.

"Then [members] might say, 'OK, we screwed up. How can we not make these mistakes again?'" Moraghan says.

Better turf, but ...

Recently, Sauls told Butler National's members that the course's greens would have to

be fumigated and regrassed with a newer and better bentgrass if they wanted fast greens throughout the season.

"I thought they would back off, but they said, 'OK, what's it going to take and what's it going to cost?'" Sauls says. "The members are determined. They want fast greens day in and out."

In the fall, the course will be closed, fumigated and regrassed with one of the A series bentgrasses from Turf-Seed. The A series bentgrasses develop a deep root system and perform well under high traffic, according to Turf-Seed. They also don't have to be managed so intensely to keep them fast.

Sauls believes he'll be able to provide greens running at 10.5 daily, even during hot stretches. He hopes that's fast enough.

New turf varieties are more apt to withstand the stress that comes with fast greens. William Myer, director of the turfgrass breeding project at Cook College/Rutgers University, says some of the newer bentgrass varieties are more dense and hold up better to low cutting heights and traffic.

"Some of the newer bents look denser and brighter and are more dollar-spot resistant," Myer says. "And because they're denser, they're more competitive with *Poa annua* than the older bents."

But that doesn't mean the new bents are completely shielded from the problems associated with fast greens. Lynch says some superintendents mistakenly believe that seed and turf companies can correct the agronomic problems that come with fast greens through scientific know-how. These superintendents believe companies can create and market turf seed that can withstand the rigors of low-mowing heights, intense maintenance and the worst Mother Nature has to offer. But Lynch warns superintendents not to be wishful thinkers when it comes to having the perfect turf for fast greens.

"There's no magic bullet," he affirms.

Those caught in the middle of the green-speed issue wonder if the saga will ever end. Or will greens just keep getting faster and faster?

"Is somebody going to say, 'If I can get the greens rolling at 12, why can't I get them rolling at 13? Kerman says. "And if I can get them to 13, why can't I get them to 15?'"

One thing is for sure: Superintendents don't need anymore high-handicap golfers complaining that their courses' greens are too slow. ■

Sure Thing #3:

DIMENSION[®] CONTROLS ALL SEASON LONG.

There are some things in life you can count on. Like Dimension[®] herbicide. You can count on it to control all season long. You can count on it to provide early postemergent control of crabgrass. And you can count on it not to stain. With Dimension, there's never a doubt.

 Dow AgroSciences

Dimension^{*}
Specialty Herbicide

ALL YOU NEED. ALL SEASON LONG.

For the latest university trials, visit our Web site at www.DimensionHerbicide.com

*Trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC. Always read and follow label directions.



See You in San Diego

Often overlooked in lieu of its star-studded SoCal neighbor L.A., the city has a historical charm all its own – and a view of the Pacific Ocean to die for. It's a great site for the GCSAA show

BY MARK LUCE

Show at a Glance

The GCSAA Conference and Show, set for Feb. 9 through Feb. 14 at the San Diego Convention Center, will feature an array of educational seminars and a trade-show floor containing more than 700 exhibitors. For more information, contact www.golfcourseshow.com.

Even from its earliest days, people seem to overlook San Diego. When Portuguese explorer Juan Rodrigues Cabrillo was searching for a quicker route back to Europe, he spent some time there and quickly moved along. Sixty years later, Sebastian Vincaino arrived in harbor, named it San Diego and left. It wasn't until 1769, when a mission was set up by Franciscan monk Juipero Serra, that the area stopped being a place for small numbers of native tribes, and modernization began rearing its sometimes gorgeous (and sometimes ugly) head.

Even though most folks think of Los Angeles when they hear the phrase Southern California, let's get something straight — San Diego is about as far south as you can get in California. The metro area of nearly 3 million people is more than just a navy town. It hosts a variety of historical treasures along with an array of shopping and dining options all set amidst a backdrop of stirring sunsets, stunning beaches and citizens that have a far more

laid-back attitude than their La-La land brethren. It's a town of charm and increasing sophistication with good weather and better eats. It will, as it has done to so many, make you never want to go back home. As you traverse the annual GCSAA Conference and Show, set for Feb. 9 through Feb. 14, make a point to get out and about. To help, *Golfdom* has culled and cajoled some of the best-kept secrets of the San Diego area.

Getting downtown

The landing is rather scenic and is one of the toughest descents in the United States for pilots. But now that you are on the ground, look for the taxi stand to get to your hotel. It will take about 10 minutes (more during rush hour) and around \$10 to get downtown from San Diego International Airport. If you plan ahead, you'll know whether your hotel has a shuttle to drop you at the door for free (and a tip, of course). There are a variety of other shuttles, such as **Cloud 9 Shuttle** (800-9-SHUTTLE), that will get you downtown for about \$5.

The biggies

San Diego loves its animals, even if they are from far across the globe. The world-famous **San Diego Zoo** (2929 Zoo Drive, 619-234-3153) may be the best menagerie in the world, and it's set in the large and lovely Balboa Park. The



PHOTODISC

place, set on 100 acres, houses 4,000 critters — great and small — including the oh-so-cute and very rare pandas and playful polar bears. If you go, try the “best value” (\$32) approach on your tickets, since it includes a guided bus tour to keep your dogs from getting worn out.

The cousin to the Zoo is the **San Diego Wild Animal Park** (15550 San Pasquel Valley Road, Escondido, 760-747-8702), an 1,800-acre behemoth that lets its 3,500 animals roam freely. The best way to see the park is the Wgasa Bush Line Railway, which is included in the park’s \$27 admission. The hour-long monrail tour affords great views, but you should arrive early since the lines can get super long.

If landed animals aren’t your bag, head up to **Sea World** (500 Sea World Drive, Mission Bay, 619-226-3901), a 165-acre theme park dedicated to all things swimming and jumping. Killer whales, dolphins, sea lions leap and laugh through a variety of shows. The Shamu Adventure, the park’s signature show that takes place in pool that hold 7 million gallons of water, will douse anyone sitting in the first several rows.

Two neighborhoods

Gaslamp Quarter — This exciting area is literally across the street from the San Diego Convention Center. This area used to be urban blight,

but now it’s one of the hottest spots in San Diego — dining and drinks and shopping are everywhere. Russell Lewis, senior editor of San Diego’s KPBS radio, the NPR affiliate, says he enjoys the bustle, charm and architecture of the Gaslamp district. To put your feet up and maybe grab a corned beef and cabbage or fish and chips, Lewis suggests **The Field**, (544 Fifth Avenue, 619-232-9840), a friendly neighborhood pub that had all its furnishings shipped from Ireland.

If you have money to burn — and we do mean, literally, burn — step up to the ultimate test at one of the three locations of **Fred’s Mexican Café** (527 Fifth Ave., Gaslamp Quarter, 619-232-8226; 1165 Garnet Ave., Pacific Beach, 858-483-8226; or 2470 San Diego Ave., Old Town, 619-858-8226). While they’ve got bar fare with Pacific flair, the real deal is the \$284 margarita. That is not a misprint. Two shots of Jose Cuervo 1800 Collection, a 25-year old tequila, in margarita mix. To date, say the bartenders, one has been sold. However, if you choose not to sully your fine tequila with sweet and sour, one shot of the 1800 collection will set you back \$145.

Old Town — To the north and west of Gaslamp rests historic Old Town, home of the gorgeous

Continued on page 40

San Diego has turned itself from a city that most people overlooked to a vibrant, eclectic town that’s sure to entertain.

See You in San Diego



The Gaslamp Quarter (above) is the place to find the best restaurants and nightlife in the city. Balboa Park (below) is the location of the world-famous San Diego Zoo.

Continued from page 39

Presidio Park and the hub of one of the best ways to see the various parts of the city quickly, the **Old Town Trolley** (619-298-TOUR). Kim Almquist, a resident of Lawrence, Kan., and several-time visitor to San Diego (she dreams of retirement there), says the trolleys (\$24 for a 30-mile loop) allow her to see most of the city in a day. "It was great," she says. "You can get off, shop, eat or just look around as long as you want and then just hop on the next one."

Lewis, though, treasures one of Old Town's most popular restaurants, **El Agave Terquilaria**

(2304 San Diego Ave, 619-220-0692). The food may be a little pricey, Lewis says, but the *molé* made with chocolate is unbelievable.

Other eats

For upscale eclectic fare, Lewis suggests the **Kensington Grill** (4055 Adams Ave., 619-281-4014). The Kensington is next door to the **Ken Cinema** (4061 Adams Ave. 619-283-5909), where film lovers go to see revivals, cult classics and avant-garde movies. Down Adams is the **Adams Avenue Grill** (2201 Adams Ave. 619-298-8440), a great place for breakfast or dinner. "It has great American fare from macaroni and cheese to a spicy Kickin' Chicken sandwich," Lewis says.

To feel like he's are sitting atop the Pacific, La Costa Resort superintendent Steve Auckland likes to head down to **Cane's Bar and Grill** (3105 Ocean Front Walk, 858-488-1780) on the boardwalk in Mission Beach. "It gets a little wild at night, so I like to go in the afternoon, sit outside and look at the ocean," Auckland says. The grill's Baja Sampler provides a good variety of the flair of Southern California's fare.

Up the coast

Auckland, who moved to the area two years ago, can't say enough about how much he likes the laid-back style and gorgeous views throughout the *real* Southern California. If you can get away, Auckland says, try out the downtown of Carlsbad, which he calls "a nice, quaint, romantic spot." The town is about 40 minutes north of San Diego. Auckland likes to hit **Coyote Grill**, which features live jazz, blues and rock, as well as a diverse clientele and outdoor fire pits. (300 Carlsbad Village Drive, Carlsbad, 760-729-4695)

Shopping

If you need to get the goods to take back home to your better half and the kiddies, there is no shortage of places to go. For the Beverly Hills of San Diego, head up to **La Jolla**, a tony town with plenty of sophisticated shops and boutiques. The streets are loaded with stores, and the bibliophiles must be sure to stop at **John Cole's Bookshop** (780 Prospect, La Jolla, 858-454-4766), where you can browse through a novel in the patio garden.

Continued on page 42

