



Questions From The Floor

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We've built a number of sand bunkers this year, and the members expect them to immediately offer the same conditions as existing bunkers.

In your experience, how long does it take for new sand in a bunker to reach normal or acceptable condition for play? (Dane County)

It is unlikely that new sand bunkers will play the same as the older models very soon unless they are given extraordinary care. Old sand is usually contaminated with silt and clay from eroding soil on the slopes or from excessively deep raking with motorized equipment. Contaminated sand usually requires frequent, rather deep raking to maintain playability.

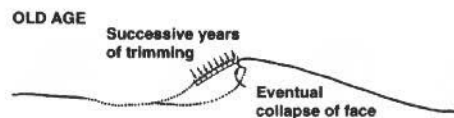
New sand doesn't have these cementing agents, so it must be settled, tamped or packed into place so that the entire profile is firm. That takes time—two or three months or over winter in most cases—if the sand is acceptable. The best in Wisconsin are washed mason's sand with particle sizes ranging from 0.25 to 1.00 mm (will pass through a # 18 sieve and be retained on a # 60 sieve), with a wide range of particle sizes in between. Angular or subangular particles are preferred since round grains are more resistant to compaction.

Note that particle size is similar to that of topdressing/construction sand, but particle shape and size distribution are different.

Speaking of bunkers, what is the depth of sand you recommend in bunkers? (Dane County)

For championship play the USGA recommends 2 to 3 inches on bunker faces and 4 to 6 inches on the floors. This may vary according to the slopes and length of the greenside faces, however. Steep slopes are easily eroded and washouts are the rule rather than exception. When sand is thrown back it must be re-packed to avoid imbedded ball problems, and shallow sand packs more easily.

Steep slopes are often the result of the aging process and may not come close to resembling the original architecture. They were made, not born, by erosion and edging for a period of



years. (Line drawing from Hawtree)

Now that the turf groomers have been in use for several years, what is your current thinking about their value in preparing a putting surface for daily play? Are they making a difference? How often should they be used on a green? Daily? Weekly? (Milwaukee County)

Groomers are used on many courses to slightly increase Stimpmeter readings (3 to 4 inches) without reducing the height of cut. This is similar to double-cutting because it reduces drag on the rolling ball. A few superintendents use groomers daily, but most prefer an every other day routine, running in straight lines only with no perimeter cut, to avoid excessive leaf removal. Operating depth is very important, to avoid peeling the greens, and that will vary depending on height of cut, softness/firmness of the surface, etc., as well as the population of speed freaks playing the course.

My sense is that some Wisconsin golf course superintendents are now rolling their greens on a regular basis. Am I right? How much does rolling increase green speed, and how long does the effect last? What is the best frequency and direction? Won't soil compaction be a problem? (Waukesha County)

Rolling is an old procedure, once used to avoid mowing on weekends (the light rollers were wider than the mowers and had no baskets to empty). Today, rolling is used periodically to temporarily increase green speed and surface firmness desired

for tournament play.

Increased putting speed depends on the weight of the roller, the height of cut and, perhaps, the number of passes over the greens. According to Jerry Kershasky, heavy rollers used at Westmoor increase Stimpmeter readings about 12 inches, with a half-life of one day. Lighter rollers have been built which replace the cutting units of Jacobsen triplexes. Toro triplexes have become light rollers by putting weights in the clipping baskets so that the large front roller applies more downward pressure. These have increased Stimp readings a bit, but I don't know how much.

I see no particular harm in rolling if the top couple of inches of the profile is sand. Round sand. Topdressing mixtures containing soil or high levels of highly decomposed peat are likely to become compacted, so they should not be rolled heavily. Some light rolling to smooth out surfaces roughened by heavy play may be OK, but compaction-related problems must be expected and corrected by spiking, hollow tine aeration, etc.

First we had plant materials for 150 yard markers. Then we went to flat granite markers at 150 yards. They were removed in favor of scores of yardage markers on top of sprinkler heads on either side of the fairway.

Now our players want 150 yard markers back. What would you recommend? (Green County)

Personally, I like the old USGA/ Joe Dey philosophy that depth of vision was as important to the golf play as strength, so no visual aids should be provided. Nevertheless, 150 yard markers sold a lot of bushes and some golfers must have favored automatic irrigation systems just to get the yardage numbers on the sprinklers (now up to three per head). I like Zontek's "Just Hit It" example.

Why not give people what they want? We have whiffle balls or flag-

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