

Hot Cocoa in July

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Cocoa probably wasn't your first choice of beverage during the torrid weather we experienced across the upper Midwest during July and early August. However, a coco mat may just be your best friend when you need to groom a putting surface for competitions or special events during the heat of midsummer.

It's strange how some basic turf maintenance practices



Coco mats can be used to lightly drag the turf to work in sand or stand up the turf for mowing during stress times or anytime.

seem to fall in and out of favor through the years. Rolling, brushing and grooming come to mind. During the early 90's, groomers were the rage and it was hard to find a roller or brush attachment on a mower being used at any golf course. Now, everyone rolls, brushing is gaining momentum, while grooming is so "last decade."

It's too bad that the use of coco mats falls into the category of trendy maintenance practices. When I inquire about coco mats at Turf Advisory Service visits the typical responses are: never tried them, too expensive or too old school. Yet, they remain a highly useful, versatile and underutilized option for grooming a putting surface during stressful conditions.

Experienced superintendents suspended aggressive maintenance practices when the hot, humid weather settled in. Some superintendents who didn't now have experience establishing temporary greens. Higher heights of cut, limited topdressing, less mowing and more rolling make sense during a heat wave, but also the putting surface can become dense and matted. A coco mat may be the best option for addressing this concern.

Vertical mowing and the use of a heavy topdressing brush are out of the question when the temperatures climb into triple digits, but you still may be able to gently lift the turf just prior to mowing with a coco mat. Furthermore, a lightweight cocoa mat can be an effective option for moving a little sand topdressing into a putting surface without causing excessive abrasion to the turf.

Go outside the box and talk to vendors that provide equipment to sports field managers and golf courses. You will be surprised to find that coco mats come in a wide variety of sizes and prices that can accommodate most any need or budget.



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