

Things Learned On The Golf Course Beat

One of the most pleasant sounds of the last half of summer is the sound of crickets.

Did you know that you can use crickets to estimate the temperature? The formula is very simple. Count the number of chirps and add 39. The sum is the air temperature at the time.

Did you ever wonder why we have 18 holes on the golf course instead of 10 or a dozen or even 20? Here's one explanation I read.

When the members of the Society of St. Andrews laid down their rules for the game, the course at St. Andrews (known today as the Old Course) had 12 holes. The first eleven holes played

straight out to the end of a peninsula. When the members had played out they returned to the clubhouse by playing the first 10 greens backward plus a green by itself by the clubhouse.

Their round was therefore 22 holes.

They played "out" until they reached the "end" hole and played "in" the same holes. If a group going in met a group coming out, preference was given to those playing out. The outgoing holes were marked with a small pin sporting a white flag; incoming holes had a red flag.

In 1764 the Royal and Ancient decided that the first four holes should be converted into two. This resulted in a round being reduced from 22 to 18. And since the R & A pretty much was the authority of golf then, 18 holes soon were accepted as the standard in Scotland and England and eventually throughout the world.

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Since most of us love trees, here is some plant physiology you'll find interesting. The chemical process of photosynthesis causes trees to run a daily temperature! And their trunks are larger in diameter in the daytime when they are pumping sap than at night when they aren't.

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The worry over global warming in the past created a lot of interest in climatic numbers. In the past four decades the nights have been getting warmer but average daytime temperatures haven't budged much.

In those 40 years the average maximum nighttime temperatures have increased 1.5 degrees F., but daytime highs haven't changed.

And those nighttime increases may be due to changes in cloud cover, not "greenhouse gases".

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Here's a short and quick way to estimate your bunker sand requirements.

1. Sand weighs about 96 pounds per cubic foot.
2. One ton of sand equals 22 cubic feet.
3. One ton of sand will cover 66

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Golf Course Beat —

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square feet of depth of 4 inches or 44 square feet at a depth of 6 inches.

4. An "average" sand bunker will use 5 to 8 tons of trap sand at a depth of 4 to 6 inches depth.

5. Formula to determine amount of trap sand required: length X width X depth X 96 divided by 2000 = tons of sand needed.

* * *

I once read how, in the early days of golf in America, players used a little pile of wet sand to tee up their ball on the tee ground when they started the play of a hole. I was contemplating whether the sand going between sharp reels and bedknives would be a bigger problem than the thousands of little pieces of colored wood we see on teeing ground at the end of each work day these days. That led to a little investigative work on the wooden tee.

A gentleman named Dr. William Lowell is credited with inventing the wooden tee. He was a dentist from South Orange, New Jersey who took up golf when he was 60. He disliked

the grit and mess of teeing the golf ball on the pyramid of wet sand. He used dental tools to whittle a golf tee as a substitute for sand.

His playing partners referred to his wooden tees as "suppositories for wildcats"! His sons, however, saw the commercial potential in the tee and in 1924 Dr. Lowell received a patent for his invention.

It was named the "Reddy Tee" and came packed in boxes of 18 and sold for a quarter a box.

Lowell imagined golfers would leave them behind and use a box per round. He even planned a biodegradable version until he realized golfers were hanging onto the wooden ones.

The wooden tee got a big boost when Walter Hagen tracked Dr. Lowell down in his dental office to get some of the wooden tees. Hagen was the U.S. Open champ at the time.

Advertised as the "Tee of Champions", 70 million Reddy Tees sold worldwide in 1929. By then everyone was catching up to Lowell, and his Reddy Tee Company office was closed in 1933. But the wooden tee is still with us.

—Monroe Miller, *Grass Roots*



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