

Survey Reinforces GCSAA's Stance on Alternative Spikes

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A survey of GCSAA members indicates that 94% of superintendents support the use of alternative spikes, and that within two years, nearly half of all courses will ban metal spikes.

The survey, distributed to 1,085 attendees of an educational seminar luncheon at the 1997 conference and show in Las Vegas, collected data on a variety of issues, including existing alternative-spike policies, factors relating to the development of a policy, effective sources of information on the issue and the effects of a spikeless policy on maintenance areas.

GCSAA's alternative-spike position, which was announced at the Las Vegas conference and show, is that "... facilities should consider requiring the use of these alternatives."

The position also states that "while it is the responsibility of each golf course to determine what policy is best for their facility, GCSAA is committed to facilitating the development of these policies through the accumulation and dissemination of information. As a result, it is in the best interest of facilities to consult with the golf course superintendent before making a decision..."

Survey results provide useful information about existing attitudes on alternative spikes and the establishment of alternative-spike policies. For example, findings show it may be easier to implement policies at private facilities. Forty-five percent of respondents from private clubs have an alternative-spikes policy, and 30% encourage alternative spikes. Only 13% of other respondents (from daily-fee, municipal and resort facilities) have an alternative-spikes policy, and 39% encourage alternative spikes.

Superintendents also rated the positions of others at their facilities, and they indicate many are "strongly for"

alternative spikes: 70% of owners/leadership groups, 65% of professionals, 65% of green committees, 52% of club managers and 43% of memberships.

In addition, the survey showed:

- The playability of the putting surface and the quality of the turf are the most important reasons for switching to alternative spikes.

- GCSAA and the USGA are the primary sources of information on this issue. Thirty-eight percent of respondents cite *Golf Course Management* magazine as the most effective GCSAA source.

- Superintendents rated themselves and golf professionals as the most influential in establishing a

policy.

- Nearly half of respondents indicate a belief that the brand of alternative spike makes a difference to turf quality.

- The responsibility for changeover costs rests with either golfers (40%) or facilities (35%).

GCSAA has prepared an information packet on this issue, as well as a "white paper" that provides background information and examines agronomic issues, golfer issues, current trends and GCSAA's policy. This information will also be available on GCSAA's Web site. To request a packet, contact the information services department at 800/472-7878, ext. 600.

Effects of Alternative Spikes On Maintenance Areas

	Greatly Decreased	Greatly Increased
Greens playability.....	1%	74%
Beauty/condition of greens.....	1%	62%
Tee playability	1%	16%
Practices to avoid slipping	1%	12%
Need for special signage.....	1%	12%
Greens mowing schedule.....	4%	3%
Fertilizer application to greens	1%	3%
Greens maintenance costs.....	0%	3%
Tees maintenance costs	2%	2%
Tees mowing schedule	1%	2%
Fertilizer application to tees.....	2%	2%

Note: Percentages may total slightly more or less than 100% due to rounding of individual components.

Source: GCSAA's "Alternative Spike Policies: A Membership Survey"