

## ***Developments That Contribute To Better Course Conditions? Alternative Spikes, Computerized Irrigation Head the List***

What is the golf course superintendent's equivalent to the recent equipment innovations of liquid metal club heads and titanium shafts?

According to a survey of the professionals responsible for the beauty, performance and upkeep of the nation's golf courses, alternative spike golf shoes and computerized irrigation are the most frequent responses.

Across the nation, 44% of golf course superintendents responding to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) Golf Leadership Survey said computerized irrigation systems had the single most positive effect on the game in the last five years, in terms of golf course maintenance technology. An even greater number, 60%, targeted the systems as the management advancement with the most positive impact on operating efficiency. A majority of superintendents (52%) believe water consumption will decrease significantly over the next five years due much in part to this new technology.

On the issue of innovations in golf accessories, superin-



tendents overwhelmingly credited the advent of alternative spikes for aiding efforts to deliver improved putting conditions. In fact, 89% identified alternative spikes as the accessory having the most beneficial effect on golf courses. Research indicates on the whole that alternative spikes do not damage putting surfaces as much as metal spikes, allowing for improved ball roll. Anecdotal evidence indicates alternative spikes reduce the amount of resources needed for the upkeep of greens.

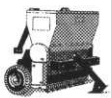
The survey also highlighted a number of other trends and issues affecting the superintendent within the industry, including the environment, golfer etiquette and maintenance equipment and staffing.

### **Environment**

In predicting changes in course operations over the next five years, the environment figured most prominently. The three most common predictions were an increase in en-

*(Continued on Page 21)*

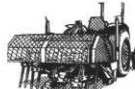
**VERTI-DRAIN® & VERTI-SEED® available only from PRECISION TURF & CHEMICAL, INC.**



Verti-Seed  
Overseeder



200 H Model -  
16 inches deep



205 Model -  
16 inches deep

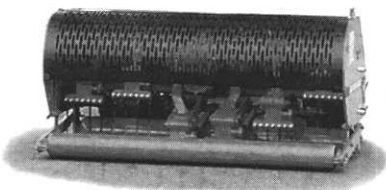


250 Model -  
16 inches deep



405 Model -  
24 inches deep

**These two new aerators can make your job 70% easier!**



7316 Model

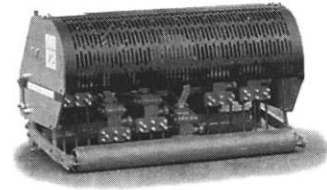


**Turf & Chemical Inc.**

7728 Commerce Circle • Greenfield, MN 55373

Office 612.477.5885 • 1.800.925.8873

Fax 612.477.6511



7212 Model

**ORDER YOURS NOW FOR SPRING DELIVERY!!!**

# Better Conditions—

(Continued from Page 16)

Environmental regulations, improved environmental management techniques and a decrease in water usage. Uncontrollable and unpredictable weather patterns will always play a role in the golf course maintenance expenditures. When queried on the effects of last year's weather phenomenon known as El Nino, 44% of respondents answered it had increased costs at their golf courses.

**Golfer Etiquette:** Superintendents identified failure to repair ball marks on the putting green as golfers' worst breach of etiquette (60%), followed by failure to rake bunkers (18%) and to replace divots (8%). Moving violations on the golf car paths were also a concern of superintendents. More than 40% cited golfers for driving on or too close to greens as the most common violation, while ignoring daily posting of golf care restrictions was next (33%).

**Slow Play/Ball and Club Design:** Golfer disdain for slow play is shared by superintendents as the poll reveals slow play is a function of golf's popularity, golfer experience and golf course conditioning. The respondents cited increased course traffic (33%), high rough and fast greens (26%) and decline of golfer etiquette (23%) as the primary causes of slow play by either lowering the rough (46%) or widening the fairways (25%).

Unlike efforts to control slow play, superintendents are not reacting to the distances achieved by new golf balls or

advances in golf club/shaft technologies. Eighty-four percent of superintendents said they were not grooming their courses to compensate for increasing distances of golf balls.

**Maintenance Equipment:** Despite the high cost of maintenance equipment, superintendents prefer to buy their equipment rather than lease. According to the survey, 68% of golf course superintendents buy their maintenance equipment, while 23% opt to lease and then purchase their equipment.

**Staffing and Image:** On staffing issues, superintendents expressed confidence and optimism for their future. 31% claimed their staff size would grow in the next year, while 65% responded their staff would remain the at the same level. Asked to critique their own image, superintendents overwhelmingly gave themselves positive reviews among players, course owners and golf professionals. Seventy-eight percent of superintendents believe players view them in a positive light, 85% believe golf course owners value their work, while 71% believed that golf professionals view superintendents positively.

## About The Survey

The 1999 GCSAA Golf Leadership Survey was conducted at GCSAA's 70th International Golf Course Conference and Show in Orlando, Fla., February 9-12, 1999. The computer-based questionnaire surveyed 1,275 golf course superintendents on trends in golf and golf management.

## QUALITY SUPPLIER OF TURF

- **Washed** and Regular Turf (Sod) in 1½ yd. or up to 55 yd. Big Roll Size (42" Wide)

### TURF TYPES:

- ELITE KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS BLEND
- SPORTS TURF  
BLUEGRASS/P. RYEGRASS BLEND  
BENTGRASS



### MEMBER

NCTGA	MGCSA
MSTMA	WTA
SDGSA	ISTMA
MTGF	TPI

For Quality Turf Contact:  
(612) 674-7937 • FAX: (612) 674-7044

8651 Naples St. N.E.  
Blaine, MN 55449

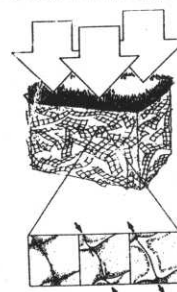
## QUALITY CONSTRUCTION & RECONSTRUCTION

- **Golf Courses**
- **Sports Fields**



### NETLON® ADVANCED TURF SYSTEMS

Self-Cultivating means healthier turf  
and better drainage.



### NETLON® MESH ELEMENTS AND MIXES

For Compaction Resistance on cart paths,  
sports fields and other high use areas.

For Quality Construction & Netlon® Products Contact:  
(612) 784-0657 • FAX: (612) 784-6001