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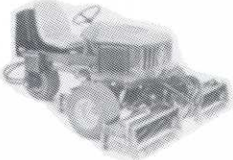
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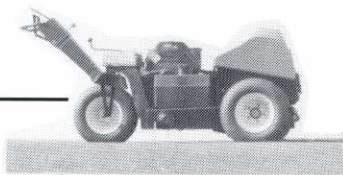


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# ALTERNATIVE SPIKES

More than two and one half years ago, in the June 1995 issue of *JD Approach*, the subject of finding workable alternatives to traditional steel golf spikes was a hot topic. At that time, data was just beginning to come in from clubs where soft spikes were the rule — there were only about 100 courses where soft spikes were regularly used, and even fewer than that where steel spikes had been banned.

A lot has changed. More than 2,000 courses — with that number going up literally everyday — now prohibit the use of steel spikes.

Why has the acceptance of alternative spikes spread so rapidly?

Two main reasons:

1. Golfers have become more demanding, especially when it comes to the quality of the putting surface. As they learned what alternative spikes can mean on the green, they led the charge.

2. A variety of alternative spikes have been developed and are readily available.

## What's Ahead?

The search for alternatives to steel spikes has been around about as long as the spikes themselves — which means since the late 1940s. Few have ever contested the fact that steel spikes can damage turf — especially in delicate areas like tees and greens — or that they can be unknowing agents for spreading disease and pests. But, until this decade the concern for change wasn't supported by viable alternatives.

Now, with the support of such organizations as the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) the movement to replace steel spikes has gained momentum.

At its 1997 conference in Las Vegas, GCSAA conducted a survey to gauge the interest in soft spikes. The result showed that soft spikes are not a fad, they are a trend — 45 percent of those representing private clubs said they already have a soft spike rule, while an additional 30 percent said they encourage the use of alternatives. In the public sector, only 13 percent of those surveyed said they had a soft spike rule, while 39 percent said they encouraged players to switch away from steel spikes.

On a personal note, more than 90 percent of the GCSAA's members said they favored a switch to soft spikes, and predicted that half the courses in the country would go that route within two years.

## Reasons for Switching

The playability of the putting surface was the overwhelming reason for switching to alternative spikes — 73 percent of those responding put the health of the turf and its effect on play as their top priority.

For those that made the changes, it was the opinion of the golf course superintendent and the club pro that held the most weight. And, in most cases (40 percent) golfers were expected to pay for the changeover — in the first years when clubs were pushing members to go with soft spikes, they spent \$4,000 to \$5,000 providing each player with new spikes. Now, it is more common to find that clubs will change-out a player's shoes for a slight fee.

The factors that superintendents and golf professionals consider in making a recommendation to their club management fall into three basic groups — agronomic, golfers and

the industry.

## Agronomic

These are the concerns for the health of the plants on greens and tees, spread of diseases and pests, soil compaction and the overall "look" of the course.

## Golfers

These are more difficult to measure, but include the ability to have sure footing without slipping, overall comfort — soft spikes are said to be easier on a player's back and knees than steel spikes — and the quality of the putting surface. Of these, the quality of the putting surface is the easiest to measure. All you have to do is look at a green after a busy day and see a smooth, unmarked surface to know there's a difference.

## The Industry

What are other courses doing? How do professional tour players react? Davis Love III won the 1997 PGA Championship at Winged Foot wearing soft spikes!

The GCSAA, after weighing all the factors and evaluating its survey results came to two conclusions:

- 1) Courses should encourage the use of alternative,
- 2) The golf course superintendent should play a major role in any decision to change.

Nearly three years ago the *JD Approach* story concluded that "the jury is still out" on the use of soft spikes. It appears that the deliberations are all but over — steel spikes have been found guilty.

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(Ed. Note: This article was reprinted with permission from *JD Approach*.)



# Dealing With People

*Managing Your Staff Needn't Be More Difficult  
Than Mowing Grass and Battling Insects*

## **If You Want Something Done Right, Do It Yourself!**

The days when that was an option are mostly over. Maintaining a golf course today means learning to manage a staff, not just care for turf and maintain equipment.

"Today's golf course superintendent is perceived as one of the true professionals at the club," says Jeff Burgess, Director of Golf Maintenance for the prestigious Weston Golf & Country Club, Toronto, Canada. "You've got to wear a lot of different hats to be a superintendent. You have to know grass, but you also have to be politically correct, a good communicator and a good motivator for your staff. People skills and presentation skills are becoming more and more important."

Sometimes, taking care of plants and machines is the easy part, but here are suggestions for honing your management skills:

### **Learn to Communicate Clearly**

Employees who feel they are part of the overall plan for a successful course feel better about what they do and are more willing to pitch in and pull extra duty. But, don't just give them a quick overview, bring them in on the little things, too. Changes in work or vacation schedules, special assignments, or a new format for their payroll may seem minor to you, but

these can be big deals to your crew. Explain things and you prevent costly rumors.

### **Share Responsibility**

You cannot do everything yourself and when you come to grips with that, you are way ahead. You have to learn to delegate responsibilities to your staff — and you have to let them make some of their own mistakes and solve problems in their own way. Just because it isn't your way, doesn't mean it's the wrong way.

### **Establish Clear Guidelines**

Even though you are giving your staff more freedom to grapple with day-to-day decisions doesn't mean you're giving up control. The bottom line responsibility still falls on your shoulders. Set up a clear set of guidelines so your staff knows when to handle problems themselves and when to call you in. Be open to staff recommendations and don't second guess your people's decisions — especially not in front of the rest of the staff. When everyone knows the ground rules, everyone can function more efficiently.

### **Don't Make Disagreements Personal**

If you do disagree with a decision one of your people has made, or the way he or she is operating, don't take

it personally. Maintain a professional attitude and be objective.

### **When You Notice Problems, Act**

While it isn't good to try to do too much, it is equally harmful to wait too long to react to a problem situation. When you identify a problem, take action, but do it in a positive, constructive way. Don't just nitpick and criticize.

### **It Doesn't Take Long To Say "Thank You"**

Think back to your own experience and former bosses. A word or two of praise for a job well done, and a simple "thank you," go a long way in boosting employee confidence. Your staff needs to know when you're pleased with their performance, not just when you aren't.

### **Don't Treat Every Employee the Same**

Blasphemy! No. All employees don't possess the same skills, the same experience or the same temperament. That means you shouldn't have the same expectations for everyone, nor should you try to motivate or manage everyone with the same style. Some need a tight reign and precise directions, while others need freedom to tackle problems on their own. Your most difficult job may be figuring out which is which.

### **Don't Make Hasty Decisions**

Information is the key to success. Don't make management decisions without all the up-to-date information you can get — from formal employee evaluations, casual conversations and periodic observations of your own. By knowing what's going on you can avoid unpleasant surprises — for you and the crew.

*(Ed. Note: This article was reprinted with permission from JD Approach.)*

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**(320) 253-1331**

## FOR SALE

- 1983 Toro Greensmaster 3 triplex riding greensmower. 14 h.p. Kohler. Very good Reel stock, 8 blade reels, 4 bolt adjust. **\$900**

- 1986 National 84" Triplex mower, 16 h.p. Kohler engine, excellent condition. . . . . **\$800**

- 1983 Columbia Utility Cart with box. . . . . **\$300**

- 1987 Columbia Golf Cart. **\$400**

- 1988 Horvick 20" Trailer Sprayer with 70 gal. tank with TeeJet 744 electric controls. **\$800**

This equipment is for sale from the Fargo Park District. All equipment is sold as is with no warranty. All equipment can be viewed at Edgewood Golf Course Maintenance Shop between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Phone 235-8234 for appointment. Ask for Mark Lindberg.

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**TORO 474 1" BRASS  
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Requires 1/4" valve key.  
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All controllers include steel pedestal and control panel.

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Toro Fairway Aerator  
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Used one season.  
Price is negotiable.

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Great condition... \$1,000  
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\$1,500 or best offer.

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Midwest distributor of Toro products seeking mechanic with experience in commercial lawn equipment repair or set up including hydraulics, drive train, electrical and diagnostics. Must have own tools. OPEI certification(s) or ability to be certified a plus. Competitive wages and incentives based on experience. Benefits include health, dental, life insurance and 401K. Send resume or apply in person to: Randy Mackeben

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McLane 10-blade  
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Gas Golf Cars  
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Gas Golf Cars with Tops

Contact: DALE BURMEISTER

**(320) 656-5831**

## Construction—

(Continued from Page 7)

construction to run drain tiles through the subsoil which should solve the above two problems.

### GREENS

□ Buy or borrow a set of sieves to check sand mix before it is dumped at green sites.

□ **Do not** let the end of drain tile, frequently referred to as the clean-out, be plugged up or buried. Run the end to a six- or 12-inch vented box. Your system needs air to properly drain and this is its only source.

□ Consider using a plastic barrier around the perimeter of the green, from the top to the subsoil before adding greensmix. This will prevent localized dry spots on edges. The surrounding area cannot leach water or nutrients from the sandmix and this may help prevent invasion of pythium root rot.

### Checks for Ponds

□ Suggested depth is 12 feet with a 1-foot bounce in order to have the different water temperatures at different levels invert. This will keep water oxygenated, healthy, reduce algae growth, reduce the needs for chemicals. Remember deeper and smaller is better than shallower and larger

### Checks for Design And Maintenance Concerns

□ You can prevent many future problems by playing the layout before, during, after construction with golfers of different abilities. Try to envision where the balls will land from all possible locations. Try to determine possible areas of slow play, areas where balls may land off site, and areas where balls could be hit and be a hazard to other golfers.

□ Look for changes that could be made so that your equipment can do the mowing. Notice too steep of slopes, too small of bunkers, humps that equipment will scalp and alignment of tee to fairway to green for correct direction of play.

### Checks for Irrigation System

□ Is the system adequate for current needs at peak times? Is it ungradeable? And, do you have enough quick couplers to cover greens and tees?

□ Get an "as built" plan before final payment is made.

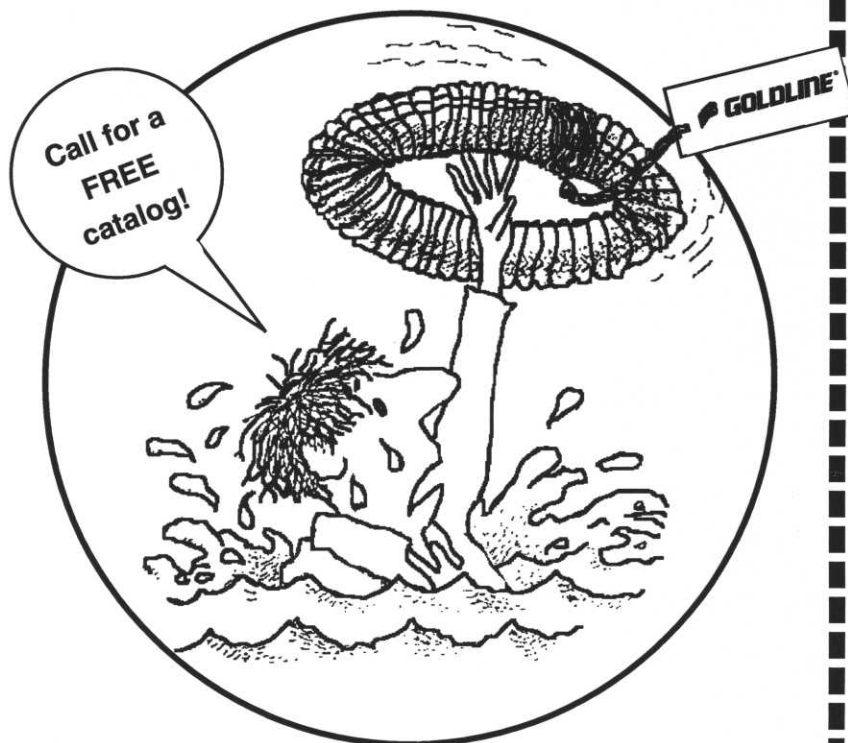
□ A handy tip is to have 110v and 220v service run to ponds and to pump

station for future pond aerators and other general uses.

### Checks for Permits

□ Don't assume all permits such as wetlands, watershed, DNR, wetland delineation lines, etc. have been filed with copies available. Keep your own file because you are the one they will ask questions of in the future.

Not every hole has to have a  
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# National Convention—

(Continued from Front Cover)

Beach is now a part of the Pacific Ocean. PGA tournaments have been shortened to 54 holes as superintendents scrambled to keep their courses playable. Cross your fingers and think positive that Mother Nature will be in a good mood towards Minnesota Supers this spring.

**Tom Kientzle, CGCS, Cragun's Resort**, was the only MGCSA member to bring home some crystal at the rain-shortened GCSAA Golf Tournament. Tom was runner-up in the 5th flight. Twelve MGCSA members participated in this year's tournament.



**MGCSA President Jim Nicol, CGCS, offers James Snow, USGA Green Section, an MGCSA Research donation check of \$3,000.**

## The Don Belkengren Dinner Tour

Rains in California made walking to a restaurant undesirable so North Star Turf Supply's Don Belkengren decided to arrange for a shuttle bus and take eight MGCSA members out for a steak dinner. Don asked the driver if reservations were needed for this restaurant and the driver replied, "No, I was just there and the place was slow."

The group was dropped off. As the bus left, they went inside to find the host say "I'm sorry, but we are full for the night." Don quickly gave the host the phone number to the shuttle bus so they could get picked up and find another restaurant.

The party stopped at Tony Romas but was denied a table. They finally found a restaurant that would serve them. It was the Stagecoach Inn, just two blocks from their hotel, but it would be a 30-minute wait.

The nine went into the lounge to have a beverage but found them to be out-of-stock of many popular flavors. The group enjoyed some camaraderie as they waited for their table. After 30 minutes had passed, Don asked the host if a table was ready. The host replied "It should be just a short time."



**Jaime Ortiz-Patino, accepts a donation from the MGCSA to the Friends of the Foundation from President Jim Nicol, CGCS.**

As another 15 minutes ticked away, Don was told that the table was finished with dinner and was having some coffee. After a few pots of coffee their table was finally ready after another 30 minutes.

Don's dinner group finally sat down at their table about 9:15 p.m. Two hours after they arrived and three hours after they started out.

The group ordered and finished eating about 9:50 p.m. They were then told that the restaurant was to close at 10:00 p.m., barely enough time to have an after dinner cup of coffee.

The group did, however, enjoy the evening and requested that Don organize another dinner outing next year in Orlando!



**MGCSA Hospitality Night in Anaheim attracted 140 members to the festive occasion in California at the National Convention.**



# North Star Turf Supply Announces Sales Teams

As a result of their recently formed strategic marketing alliance, North Star Turf and Turf Supply Co. have announced the formation of new sales territory teams which, in effect, merge the two company's sales forces.

The *Northern Sales Team* is represented by Kerry Glader, Tom McCann, Scott Liestman and Shane Andrews. The *Southern Sales Team* members are Dale Parske, Scott Lombard, Jeff Churchill and Mike Welfring. As the primary focus of their territory responsibilities, Glader, McCann, Parske and Lombard will concentrate their activities within the Twin Cities metro golf market.

Don Belkengren and Gregg Brodd will cover western Wisconsin and metro accounts other than golf including municipalities, schools, universities and cemeteries. Also forming a sales team are Bill Rondeau and Peter Fanjul. They will team up to serve the Alliance's lawn care and two-step

dealer business.

Rounding out the Alliance's team selling efforts is the *New Golf Team*, represented by Dale Parske, Jeff Churchill and Shane Andrews. It will be their responsibility to initiate contact and develop a working relationship with key contacts of new golf course developments throughout Minnesota and western Wisconsin.

Also, effective immediately, Kerry Glader has been promoted to the position of sales manager. All salespeople working from the Eagan and St. Paul locations will report to Glader.

NSTS sales service activities will be supported by Wolf Weber, demo specialist and field support person, and by Jay Monson, who will operate the NSTS support truck. The Eagan facility will continue to be the home base for John Wiley and Rick Wepler. Dan Miller, Kirby Burmeister and Joe Churchill will continue to operate from the St. Paul location. Both loca-

tions, including a facility in Sioux Falls, S.D., will inventory a complete line of turf chemicals, fertilizers, seeds and golf accessories. The St. Paul and Sioux Falls locations will continue to inventory and service the Alliance's full line of commercial turf equipment.

## Shane Andrews Joins North Star Turf Supply

North Star Turf Supply announces the addition of Shane Andrews to its sales staff.

Andrews, a 1985 Penn State University graduate and former golf course superintendent, will cover a sales territory that includes west central Minnesota and a portion of the Twin Cities metro area making him a member of the Alliance's Northern Sales Team. Andrews is also an integral member of the Alliance's New Golf Team with his strong background in golf construction and grow-in.

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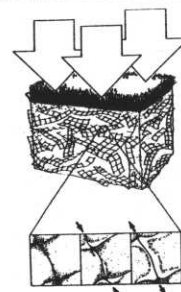
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The Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP) is a non-regulatory program that can assist Minnesota businesses in identifying and implementing options to prevent waste generation and manage waste properly. Because MnTAP is supported with industry fees, services are provided at no charge.

MnTAP was established in 1984 by the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance. MnTAP's activities are guided by the Minnesota Waste Management Act and the Toxic Pollution Prevention Act. MnTAP's mission is to provide technical assistance in the areas of industrial and solid waste management and pollution prevention to Minnesota manufacturing and service industries.

MnTAP's nonregulatory status gives its clients the confidence to ask difficult questions regarding their waste management problems and pollution prevention opportunities. Rather than focus solely on end-of-pipe treatment or control solutions, MnTAP helps Minnesota companies reduce or prevent — at the source — the amount of waste that they generate and find alternatives to using hazardous materials. By implementing waste reduction techniques, Min-

nesota companies can achieve or go beyond compliance with environmental regulations and reduce their cost.

MnTAP provides technical assistance to Minnesota businesses through the following services:

- Telephone Assistance
- Site Visits
- Materials Exchange
- Student Intern Program
- Technical Publications and Library
- Presentation and Workshops

To receive technical assistance with managing and reducing industrial and solid water or a list of technical publications available, contact MnTAP at 612/627-4646, toll free at 800-247-0015 or by mail at 1313 5th Street SE, Suite 207, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414.

— Minnesota Department of Health

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



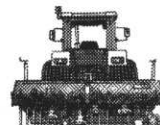
Verti-Seed  
Overseeders



200 H Model -  
16 inches deep



205 Model -  
16 inches deep

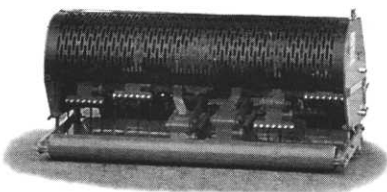


250 Model -  
16 inches deep



405 Model -  
24 inches deep

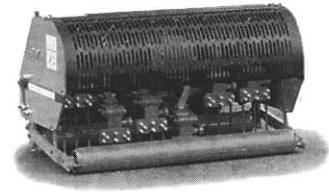
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