



Frequency For Changing Hole Locations

November 2013

Some members of our Green Committee want us to change hole locations daily. We have not done this in the past because we receive a low volume of play during the week. Should we be changing holes every day?

The frequency for changing hole locations is dependent on golfer traffic, turf growth and labor availability. For daily play, the purpose for changing the hole is primarily to distribute traffic over the entire putting surface to prevent wear damage.

During times of heavy play, changing the hole daily is likely a necessity to prevent excessive turf wear from concentrated foot traffic and spike marks and to maintain the integrity of the hole, as hole edges can easily become worn and/or damaged by players if they are careless in removing their ball from the hole or replacing the flagstick. Occasionally, hole locations may be changed twice a day if play is extremely heavy, especially on public golf courses. When play is light, golf facilities may choose to change the holes daily, not out of traffic concerns, but to keep the course more interesting for players fortunate enough to play every day.



Superintendents at heavily played courses must also consider the impact of hole locations on the pace of play. Ideally, the easier hole locations are saved for days on which the course is heavily used to help players get the flagstick in the hole and move on to the next tee more quickly. Since there are a limited number of easy locations, this means there will be days on which the holes are “tucked in” to some more difficult spots. This balancing of hole locations is particularly challenging on small, heavily contoured greens.

As a general rule, most golf course superintendents prefer daily hole changing, but not all courses have enough labor to accomplish this task every day unless it is absolutely necessary to prevent damage to the green. In reality, many golf facilities reach a compromise, with new holes cut following a day of heavy play, while using the same hole location for consecutive days when play is slow. While it may be possible to not change holes for several days when play is minimal, the interval between hole changes should not be so long that lateral turfgrass growth effectively shrinks the diameter of the hole.