



When Is A New Putting Green Ready For Play?



Putting green construction and renovation projects represent a significant financial investment. It takes careful planning and execution to ensure that putting greens are built correctly, built within budget and built to deliver high-quality playing conditions for many years. One question sure to arise during a putting green construction project is, “When will the new putting greens open?” Unfortunately, it is difficult to determine the exact opening date because putting green construction and establishment depend on many variables, some of which can be unpredictable.

Factors such as turfgrass species, planting date, weather conditions and unforeseen construction delays all impact opening date. Often, it takes 60 to 120 days to complete the construction process for 18 putting greens. It will be more expensive to build all the putting greens at the faster end of this range because larger construction crews and additional equipment will be needed.

The next step is establishment, which can take anywhere from six to 10 weeks for warm-season turfgrass species like bermudagrass when using sprigs. Cool-season turfgrass species, such as creeping bentgrass, usually require three to four months of favorable growing weather when planted from seed and roughly half that time when sod is used. Altogether, an 18-hole putting green renovation project could take between 3.5 to 8 months depending upon the turf species, establishment method and local conditions.

Regardless of establishment method, it is vital that planting occur during the ideal time of year for the turf species being used. However, unfavorable weather, such as delays during the winter season, can significantly delay construction or establishment and prolong grow in.



Due to these variables, the decision of when to open new putting greens should not be predetermined months in advance. The best approach is to carefully monitor turf progress and the weather to determine when new putting greens are ready. Many times, turf on a new putting green will look great on the surface before it is actually mature enough to withstand the stress associated with regular play. Golf facilities should rely on the expertise of the superintendent to determine when new putting greens are ready. Opening too early can result in turf failure, and putting greens may need to be taken out of play until they can fully recover and mature. When in doubt, exercise patience to stay on the right track for newly established putting greens.