

The mower found this shoe spike first.

Course Care: Responsibility of the Player Too!

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THE THEME OF the Green Section's new film, "The Golfer and the Golf Course," is that the player has an obligation to assist in course care. This doesn't mean that he's expected to rise daily at 5 a.m. to begin cutting greens at 6. This is the job for one of the paid crew, someone who also takes pride in his work! What the worker hopes is that all members too have the pride to do things that will help him do his job better. During the course of a round, the player has a chance to observe the work habits of the crew; likewise, the crew has the opportunity to see how the golfer takes care of the course. What the member does or doesn't do makes an indelible impression upon the attitude and performance of the grounds crew.

The worker expects that the golfer will do at least what the rules of etiquette require. The worker doesn't have the time and the work force isn't big enough for him to do his job and pick up after the player. We've heard a player say on occasion, "I pay to play golf, not to replace divots!" Subsequent inspection of that golf course reflects that attitude. If the members don't care, it's easy to guess how the crew will perform.

The film*, which we highly recommend be shown to all club members, makes several points that should help golfers understand that little things and sometimes seemingly insignificant things will help the golf course superintendent and his crew immensely. A number of good points were made in the film; however, some that were not included and some that need elaboration will be featured here. They are as follows:

(1) Discarding cigarette butts. There were fewer problems before filters were added, because a discarded filterless butt would burn out or decompose in a

short time. Filters don't disintegrate easily . . . so this suggestion: after each smoke, tear the filter off, discard the butt and place the filter back in the cigarette packet to be discarded at some convenient receptacle later. When discarding the cigarette, toss it in the rough where it's less visible. Never discard or lay a cigarette on the putting surface.

(2) A caddie or player leaning on the flagstick while others are putting is a common practice that should not be permitted. The proper procedure is (a) lay the flagstick on the green (don't drop it), or (b) rest the base of the stick gently on the turf, or (c) hold the flagstick off the ground in some comfortable, non-distracting manner until everybody's holed out.

(3) Leaning on the putter while retrieving the ball from the hole is another practice that should be taboo. The pressure exerted per square inch is significant, and not only causes soil compaction but also makes depressions around the hole.

To determine the force of this action, place the blade or the grip end of your putter on the bathroom scale and simulate the action of retrieving a ball from the hole. If the scale shows 15 to 25 pounds, this translates into 60 to 100 pounds per square inch.

(4) Don't permit players to use the putter blade to pop the ball out of the hole after putting out. This is not the type of example to set in putting green care, and it may mess up the area around the hole if it is done carelessly.

(5) Golfers should make a conscientious effort to tread lightly by taking shorter steps when walking on greens. A regular street-walking gait tends to plant the sharp back of the heel first, causing slight depressions as the golfer strides across greens. Also, to minimize compaction, it helps to walk on and off each green in the most practical direct route.

(6) If you spot any metal object on the course — be it a spike that came off somebody's shoe, a lost tool, a nut or bolt that came off a tractor, or any other metal object — pick it up and place it in the trash basket on the next tee, at the base of the ball washer stand, or next to the tee marker so the worker is sure to see it when he attends to his tee duties the next day. Metal damages mowers.

(7) How to repair a ball mark properly was covered in the film. However, a step-by-step description of how to repair the ball mark is included here, and it may help to display it on locker room bulletin boards. In addition, we include a photo description of how to repair a ball mark when the turf is ripped and a divot is thrown free of the ball mark.

How to Make Repairs

There is a correct way to repair a ball mark. Simply stated, it is to stretch the turf back over the bruised area, then loosen and raise the compacted soil from beneath so that the bruised turf is able to root again.

To loosen the soil, some strong, sharp-pointed instrument is preferred, such as a ball mark repair tool. The instrument must be sharp enough to penetrate the soil easily and strong enough to cut through soil laterally at a depth of one inch or less.

In stretching the turf back over the ball mark area, move soil with it so the turf is not torn loose. After the soil is loosened and raised, the bruised and stretched turf must be pressed down to make contact with the soil again; otherwise, it may dry and die.

If a divot is taken when the ball hits the green and skids, the divot must be carefully stretched and replaced after the steps outlined above are followed. If the divot is mangled beyond salvaging, work harder at stretching the turf over the scar.

*Rental price \$10.00 from USGA, Golf House, Far Hills, NJ 07931.



FIG. 1

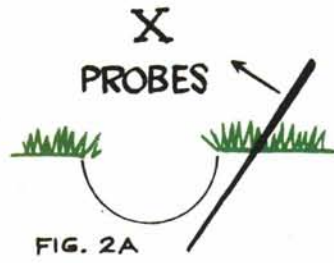


FIG. 2A

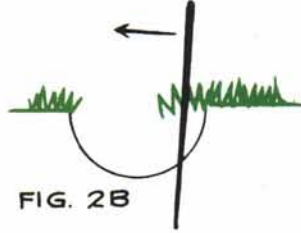


FIG. 2B

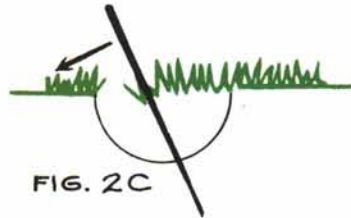


FIG. 2C

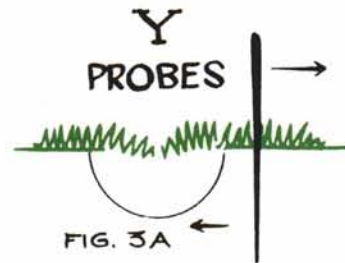


FIG. 3A

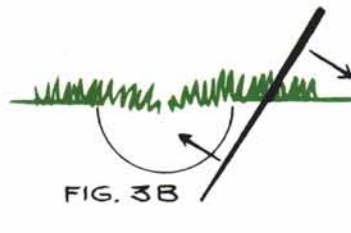


FIG. 3B



FIG. 3C

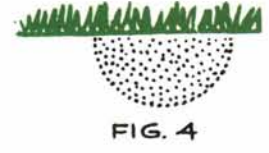


FIG. 4

Figure 1: X marks indicate probe penetration to stretch turf over ball mark. Y marks indicate probe penetration to loosen and raise soil. Figure 4 is result.

Figures 2a, b, c: To stretch bruised turf — place instrument into soil at about 45-degree angle, 1/2 inch outside perimeter, and stretch turf over ball mark by moving instrument in and down.

Figures 3a, b, c: To loosen soil — place instrument vertically into soil about 1/2 inch outside perimeter, and press instrument out and down. Thereafter, firm the turf with putter, palm of hand or shoe (except that on the line of putt you may not step on the damaged area).

The first divot is carefully fitted in place.

The second divot is similarly replaced . . . with care!





Ball marks and divots.



Ball mark is repaired according to instruction, and divots are carefully stretched.

Once again the putting surface is good as new.

