

Ten Best TURF TWISTERS

Question: Does the USGA have a ruling as to cup locations and how close a cup may be placed to the edge of a putting green? (Washington)

Answer: While many factors can affect cup location, the use of good judgment should be the first consideration. Ensure fair conditions, not tricky locations. For an area at least two or three feet in radius around the cup, the putting surface should be in good condition without any steep slopes or, if possible, any changes in the degree of slope. In other words, the green in the holing-out area should be as nearly level as possible and of uniform grade, but it does not have to be exactly level.

Next, the USGA tries to start, if possible, at least five paces away from the edge of the putting green. However, other factors must also be considered: bunker locations, the holding quality of the green, length of the shot to the green, design of the hole, etc. In no case should cups be located in tricky places or on sharp slopes where a ball can gather speed.

July/August 1966

Question: How much harm can we do by playing the regular greens this winter? (Massachusetts)

Answer: Weather conditions change so rapidly that it is difficult to give an unqualified answer. If the ground is frozen solidly or thawed beyond the depth of one inch, there is no cause for alarm as far as soil compaction is concerned. However, some grass blade damage may occur as foot traffic crushes the frozen blades. Real injury occurs when the ground thaws at the surface but not below one inch. Traffic then causes severe soil compaction, a tearing of roots from the plant and a squeezing and displacement of the soil, causing very uneven putting surfaces. The decision to play or not to play regular greens must be flexible and must rest with the superintendent, the Green Chairman and his Committee. And it may have to be changed within a few hours on any given winter day.

January/February 1968

Question: When greens are patched the new sod remains prominent seemingly forever. Is there any way to mask the fact that greens have been sodded? (Connecticut)

Answer: Yes. Follow nature's example and try to make the sod appear to be one strain growing in a circular pattern. In other words, lay the sod in the usual square or rectangular pattern and then round off and match up the outside strips in order that the new patch appears to be one continuous circular patch growing naturally. Grasses never grow in a sharp square or rectangular pattern and so this is always a dead giveaway that the green has been patched.

May/June 1971

Question: We have a steep bank, one almost too steep to mow safely, which is in an out-of-play area but in close proximity to the clubhouse, so we would like to keep it in a grass cover that will not require mowing. Is there any grass that will grow 8 to 10 inches tall, that will grow dense enough to retain the sharp slope and not look unsightly? (Maine)

Answer: Try Merion, Pennstar or Fylking bluegrass sod or seed. It will meet all these requirements. The only time that it may be a problem is when it produces seed in May; the seed stalks will grow taller but will eventually taper off again and will hardly be noticeable in the fall. While these grasses grow more than 10 inches long, they lodge (lay over) and so appear to be less than 10 inches tall.

May/June 1972

Question: What is the average shelf life of the various types of chemical pesticides? Are there any tests I can perform to check their condition? (Rhode Island)

Answer: With proper storage, pesticides can generally last one to two years. They should be stored dry and warm, not frozen. Here are some tests you can perform to determine if the chemicals have deteriorated.

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- 1) Emulsifiable Concentrates — When milky coloration does not occur by adding water, when sludge is present, and when any of the components separate, the product has deteriorated.
- 2) Oil Sprays — When milky coloration does not occur by adding water.
- 3) Wettable Powders — When excessive lumping occurs and the product will not suspend in water.
- 4) Dusts — Excessive lumping.
- 5) Granulars — Excessive lumping.
- 6) Aerosols — These are generally effective until the dispenser no longer sprays.

November/December 1972

Question: We plan to increase our rough area and reduce fairway widths this year. When is the best time to “contour cut” fairways and what height of cut would you suggest for the roughs? (Utah)

Answer: There will probably be a lot more rough on American golf courses this year than ever before. The best time to start fairway contour mowing for the grass as well as yourself will be this spring, just before growth starts. As to the height of cut for roughs, we would suggest somewhere between 1½ inches and 3 inches depending on density, type of grass, rate of growth, etc. Within this range, you should be able to get back to it (probably on a weekly basis) before a jungle or lynch party forms.

March/April 1974

Question: We are planning to rebuild several greens to the Green Section Specifications. As Green Committee Chairman I had heard that the sand layer was no longer necessary in their construction. Our Greens Superintendent disagrees . . . who is right? (New York)

Answer: The Green Section Specifications for Putting Green Construction are an exacting, scientific method of building a golf green. All parts of these Specs are well studied and tested, and all must be included as outlined until such time as our staff and our researchers tell us otherwise. If not, then the green is not a Green Section Specification green and its performance may not be good. It is therefore essential that all steps in the procedure be followed, including that of the coarse sand layer between the drainage stone and the topsoil mixture. Who is right? . . . your superintendent.

July/August 1974

Question: What are the major mistakes made in automatic irrigation installations today? (Texas)

- Answer:**
- 1) Spacing sprinkler heads too far apart.
 - 2) Main lines not “looped” to insure uniform pressure.
 - 3) Too many heads under the control of one control station.
 - 4) Sprinkler heads under the control of one station not placed at or about the same elevation.

September/October 1976

Question: I have Tifgreen bermudagrass throughout the golf course and have difficulty in developing a good uniform rough. Any ideas? (Texas)

Answer: In preparing for the U.S. Open Championship in Atlanta, Ga., last year, gibberellic acid was used in the spring at 10 grams per acre. It stimulated early growth and uniformity was best at a 3-inch height. A good fertilization program will also be important.

May/June 1977

Question: What is the maximum recommended slope or pitch that can be designed into a putting green for good surface drainage and for fairness in putting? (New York)

Answer: Generally, the maximum recommended slope is 3 percent. This is not to say, however, that some fine and challenging greens do not have slopes that exceed 3 percent. There are always exceptions to every rule, and there are those who will defend greens exceeding 3 percent to the very end . . . that’s what makes the 19th hole so interesting!

September/October 1979