

TURF TWISTERS

IT'S A GREAT FEELING

Question: With so much controversy over the Stimpmeter in the USA, I can't help wondering what superintendents in other countries must think about it. Are there Stimpmeters abroad and, if so, what reactions have you heard? (Washington)

Answer: Stimpmeters have been sent to many different countries (England, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, to name a few) and the reaction has been most favorable. Writes an Australian superintendent recently, "It is a great feeling to know exactly what speed your greens are and be able to compare them with others in the world." In most other golfing nations, the playing surfaces are usually firm and dry. Their limited irrigation and fertilization practices create putting speeds which high budget dollars alone cannot produce. Our Australian friend reports normal playing speeds of 9 feet 6 inches on his course and up to 12-foot ranges for a recent major championship!

GETTING THE BEST RESULTS

Question: How should I properly sample any sand pile to obtain one gallon of sand for laboratory testing purposes? (Texas)

Answer: Proper sampling is one of the keys to success. It is extremely important to get a uniform sample of any sand, soil or soil mix for the laboratory work. Always sample at least a half dozen locations in the pile, regardless of its size. A soil probe stuck into the pile and then emptied into a clean container from numerous locations is one excellent method. Avoid sampling from the very bottom edges of the pile where the coarser material tends to accumulate. The more sub-samples you take to fill your one-gallon requirement, the better the test results will match the results you will get from the material.

FROM FIRM GREENS

Question: I would like to keep my greens firm like the USGA recommends, but I am continually getting complaints that the greens won't hold. What can I do? (Virginia)

Answer: 1) Educate your crew, the pro, and the green committee. The greens are not supposed to hold; the golfer is responsible for making a good enough shot so the ball will spin and stop on the green. 2) Make an effort to improve the playing quality of the fairway by maintaining a firm, closely mowed surface. If close mowing (less than one inch) is not possible, mow the fairways more frequently.