

TURF TWISTERS

HOW TO REDUCE TENSION

Question: We are having problems with fried-egg lies in our bunker sand. The sand has been tested and is not round in nature, yet the membership is still complaining. Any ideas? (California)

Answer: Two ideas come to mind. First, you may wish to consider using steel leaf rakes on your bunker raking machine to reduce the penetration and disruption caused by regular raking. This surface raking has been used successfully on different types of sands that do not pack well. With a non-round sand, it is fluffed following the raking procedure. The sand particles remain in position due to small mineral deposits that act as glue after the water dries following raking. You may wish to use a very small amount of wetting agent in water and apply it to the problem bunkers every two to three weeks. The wetting agent reduces the surface tension and allows the sand particles to pack down after raking, resulting in fewer fried-egg lies.

WHEN PUTTING ABOVE

Question: I feel the slope on several of my greens is too great, since the golfers always complain that it is too difficult to putt when their ball is above the hole. Are there any guidelines for slopes on putting greens? (North Carolina)

Answer: The slope of a major portion of a putting green should usually not be greater than 3 percent, although some areas may exceed this for special reasons, such as difficult terrain or dramatic architectural effect. Proper design will allow for a minimum of three areas for hole locations, although more are desirable, especially if over 20,000 rounds are played annually.

AN OVAL HOLE

Question: If a vertical hole is cut on the steep slope of a putting green, will not that hole be of a different shape and larger than the 4¼-inch diameter permitted by the Rules of Golf? (Pennsylvania)

Answer: According to Frank W. Thomas, Technical Director for the USGA, such a hole would have very small differences that fall within hole-cutting tolerances. The major axis of the oval shape of a hole in the plane of a green surface having 8½ degrees of slope to the horizontal is approximately .040 inch greater than the minor axis. But more importantly, a hole cut on an 8½-degree slope would *not* be within the tolerance of most golfers.