

Cupit's Narrows

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WHAT IS the first thing that comes to mind when you discuss the State of Washington? That's right, a four-letter word called **RAIN!** Although water is essential to turf survival, it can also cause major problems when there is an overabundance. Such is the case in western Washington, where proper and extensive drainage is usually necessary.

Nearly all of us, at one time or another, have been involved in some type of drainage project. The most critical areas are generally near greens and landing zones where open stone drains are used. Unfortunately, the problems associated with open drains in these important play areas include:

1. Poor playing characteristics.
2. Poor visual quality.
3. Mower damage caused by loose rocks.

Placing sod over these drain lines minimizes the effectiveness of the drain, so an alternate method is needed to allow the dual

purpose of rapid surface water removal while addressing the three aforementioned concerns.

The golf course superintendent at Canterwood Golf & Country Club, Mark Cupit, has discovered an answer to this problem that has proven very effective during the past three years. It involves a four-step program that includes the following:

1. Locations near greens and landing zones are selected for drainage installation. A 4"-wide drain line is excavated using a trenching machine, a perforated drain tile is installed, and pea gravel is placed to within 1" to 2" from the surface. The remainder is capped with a medium/coarse sand.

2. Although step one is normal, Mark's turf tip is evident in step two. To address the problems cited earlier (loose rock, poor visual quality, and playing conditions), a grass cell paver is cut in half to a width of 6". These pavers are commonly used in high-traffic areas, yet are perfectly suited

to covering a drain line *when turned upside down*. The holes in the bottom are now on top, with a smooth surface and open pathways for water to enter the drain line.

3. The 6"-wide paver is driven into the ground over the 4"-wide drain line. The extra inch on both sides provides complete stability for mower and foot traffic, while keeping the drain rock and sand in place.

4. As grass begins to cover the drain line, string trimmers can be used to keep the openings free of debris, or turf can be allowed to slowly cover the pavers. If they are placed on the collar, the pavers also need to be periodically raised as topdressing builds up the surrounding profile.

This idea has worked successfully for three years on collars, green surrounds, tees, and fairway landing zones. Although it may not be the answer to all the drainage problems on your golf course, you too may fall in love with Cupit's Narrows.

Pavers installed for three years (left) display good turf coverage when compared to newly installed pavers (right).

