TURF TWISTERS

PRACTICE

Question: Now that our fairways are predominantly creeping bentgrass with excellent sod density, some of our golfers are complaining that they are mowed too closely. Where does it stop? Please comment. (Wisconsin)

Answer: You have produced a fine playing surface highly favored by skilled golfers. A half-inch mowing height is proper, yet anything higher would be of little help to hackers and much more trouble for the maintenance staff in terms of thatch management and pest control programs. There is little that can be done for less skilled players other than to very diplomatically offer sympathy and suggest lessons and practice.

COMMON SENSE

Question: Many golfers at our course have the idea that it is okay to play from the tee plaques regardless of where the tee markers are placed. These areas are heavily worn and it is nearly impossible to reestablish turf. Any suggestions to help keep golfers off the tee plaques and allow the turf to recover? (Nevada)

Answer: One method is to install chicken wire or other type of netting horizontally across the tee on the heavily played areas. The wire can be anchored with metal pins on either side of the tee. This barrier forces the golfers to stay off of the worn area until the turf has fully recovered. Be sure to communicate to the golfers that efforts are made to make sure the golf course's playing length is approximately the same from day to day. Even though some tee markers are moved forward to distribute traffic on the tee, other tee markers have been moved back to compensate for the distance.

TO CONTROL PESTICIDE MOVEMENT

Question: I am aware of the tremendous amount of research that is being conducted concerning fertilizer and pesticide movement through soils on golf courses. Is anything being done to educate golf course maintenance staffs concerning the greatest potential problem, the wash rack area? (California)

Answer: While research has not been done specifically in this area, you are right in your assumption that wash racks provide a great potential for problems on a golf course. The golf industry has responded with self-contained recycling systems that provide total leachate control. You can expect that these will become a requirement in the future as environmental regulations continue to become stricter. In the meantime, it is in everyone's best interest to be aware of what happens to the rinsate and take preventative measures to properly dispose of the material.