

## MAINTAIN

**Question:** By the end of the winter season, our bermudagrass roughs exhibit a lot of traffic damage and inconsistent cover. During the summer months they recover, but we never seem to have a dense, smooth cover consistent with other golf course roughs. Any suggestions for improvement? (Florida)

**Answer:** To produce and maintain the top-quality conditioning expected at most Florida courses, similar programs must be applied to fairways and roughs. During the summer months, the rough should be on the same aerification program as the fairways to control soil compaction and thatch accumulation. Some type of surface grooming is also needed, but at most facilities, annual verticutting of the bermudagrass rough is cost prohibitive. An alternative strategy is to scalp the roughs to 0.75 - 1.0 inch in the early summer for about two weeks. Through the rest of the growing season, maintain the rough at 1.25 - 1.5 inches and mow approximately two times per week. This height of cut for roughs provides adequate fairway-to-rough definition, but is not an excessive penalty for high-handicap golfers. As the growth rate slows in the fall, gradually raise the mowing height to 1.7 - 2.0 inches to increase wear tolerance for the winter and to retain course definition.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN

**Question:** A local government ordinance has declared a portion of our golf course to be an environmentally sensitive area. How should we mark that area so that golfers and others will know it is an environmentally sensitive one? (New Jersey)

**Answer:** Ideally, any environmentally sensitive area should be physically protected by a fence and/or warning signs to deter players from entering. It should also be marked in accordance with the recommendations in the Rules of Golf (yellow or red stakes for water and lateral water hazards, white stakes for out of bounds, or blue stakes for ground under repair). It is advised that regardless of what color stakes are used, they should have green tops to designate the area as environmentally sensitive.

## EVERYDAY GOLF PLAY

**Question:** We have an ongoing controversy here as to the accuracy of green speed measurements on our undulating greens. The speeds on the more undulating greens are never consistent with the speeds on our less severely contoured greens. Are our measurements accurate? (Rhode Island)

**Answer:** Stimpmeter measurements are not accurate when the average distances between the forward and reverse rolls vary by more than 18 inches. The following formula provides an accurate measurement for sloped areas where the variation occurs. It is as follows:

$$\text{Green speed corrected for slope} = \frac{2 \times S\uparrow \times S\downarrow}{S\uparrow + S\downarrow}$$

S $\uparrow$  = Measurement going up the slope

S $\downarrow$  = Measurement going down the slope