

TURF TWISTERS

COMMIT TO

Question: We are considering a number of projects on our course over the coming years and are debating whether to try to do the work in-house with our existing crew or to hire outside contractors. The two largest projects are rebuilding our bunkers and extending our cart path system. Do many courses attempt such projects on their own?

Answer: Many do, and many wish they had not by the time the projects are finished. Few courses are adequately staffed to take on such labor-intensive projects without sacrificing many of the daily necessities of keeping the course in good condition. Golfers often have the idea that the work can all be accomplished in the winter, since they think the crews are not busy then anyway. Actually, most golf course crews are extremely busy in the winter overhauling equipment, caring for trees, and completing many smaller-scale projects. It is also important to remember that winter weather often plays major havoc with major projects, greatly extending the time necessary to complete the work. A good compromise on major projects is to combine the expertise, equipment, and manpower of an outside contractor with some labor being contributed by the course's own staff.

BRUSHING UP ON

Question: We have tried many different raking strategies in our bunkers. I have heard that brushes can be used and that they can be fitted to mechanical bunker rakes. Is this true? (Pennsylvania)

Answer: Yes, as a matter of fact, there are several manufacturers that supply brushes that can be retrofitted to bunker maintenance equipment. However, the machine operator is essential to the success of the technique. A mechanical rake fitted with brushes requires the operator to carefully govern the speed with which the sand is groomed. Excessive ground speed promotes unevenness, with ridges of sand being one of the negative side effects. As with any procedure, practice makes perfect!

THE RULES OF GOLF

Question: I've recently been impressed with the need to improve my knowledge of course marking and the Rules of Golf. While I have taken a GCSAA seminar on this subject in the past, I would like to pursue a higher level. Do you have any suggestions? (Indiana)

Answer: Each year the USGA and PGA co-sponsor multiple Rules of Golf workshops around the country. These typically include three days of reviewing the Rules in detail, followed by a comprehensive test. Attending a USGA/PGA Rules of Golf workshop, including the exam, will improve your knowledge. Workshop locations can be determined by calling either association or checking their respective websites. Be sure to plan ahead; space is limited and the workshops fill quickly.