



Pairs of painted dots eliminate confusion over mowing responsibilities for the mowing of transition areas between fairways and approaches.

Mowing fine turf areas is one of the most basic elements of turfgrass maintenance. Proper mowing provides a neat appearance and is crucial to the uniformity of individual playing areas. If this task is not performed properly, it can create a less than desirable set of circumstances for the golfer.

At Cattail Creek Country Club, golf course superintendent Stephen Lutz experienced problems with the mowing of the transition area between the fairways and approaches. Sometimes, the individual who mowed approaches would not mow out far enough to meet the cut of the fairway mower, and vice versa. This resulted in turfgrass not being mowed in the transition between the fairways and approaches. Wear areas and compaction were also a problem. The larger fairway mowers would often turn in the same area of the approaches at every mowing, causing deterioration in turfgrass quality. The consistency between the fairways and approaches needed improvement. The ultimate goal

Connect the Dots

A simple technique helps correct a consistency problem.

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was to provide the best quality of turf in these important in-play areas.

To address this problem, Steve instituted a *connect-the-dots* system between the fairways and approaches. A set of white, yellow, and red dots were painted on each side of the approaches at various distances from the front of each green to delineate daily mowing patterns. The dots are small enough that they are barely noticeable by golfers.

The mowing of approaches dictates which set of dots will be used on a particular day, and a regular rotation is used. At every mowing, a different colored dot is used as the starting point for the approach mowers. For example, if yellow is the color for the day, the approach mowers cut from the yellow dots up to the line between the yellow dots established by the approach mower. The next time the approaches are mowed, red may be the chosen color. The cut of the mowers then meets at the red dots.

This method eliminates the confusion regarding where the approach mowers stop and the fairway mowers begin. It also effectively distributes wear from the larger fairway mowers over a broader area, which reduces the negative impact on turfgrass quality. The connect-the-dots system also provides a definitive

transition line between fairway and approach spray applications.

The dots should be painted in a different order on consecutive approaches based upon the actual area of the approaches to be mowed. The goal is to mow about the same area on any given day.

This system of small painted dots of varying colors to address mowing patterns is very simple, but effective. The results provided at Cattail Creek speak for themselves.

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- The order of colors starts with the color closest to the green.
- The underlined color indicates the limits of spray for both fairways and approaches.

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| #1. <u>White</u> , <u>Yellow</u> , <u>Red</u> |
| #2. <u>Yellow</u> , <u>Red</u> , <u>White</u> |
| #5. <u>Red</u> , <u>White</u> , <u>Yellow</u> |
| #7. <u>White</u> , <u>Yellow</u> , <u>Red</u> |
| #9. <u>Yellow</u> , <u>Red</u> , <u>White</u> |

- The colors only change with the mowing of the approaches.

