

Turf Twisters

Editor's note:

The first Turf Twister in the November/December 2003 issue contained some poor wording that was of concern to some of our readers. Following is a revised version.

Q: I am the Green Chairman at our course, and I have a question about our aeration program. Our superintendent aerates the greens each fall and early spring with large tines. I'm wondering if the spring aeration is really necessary

since we have no play during our cold winter months. Our golfers complain about the appearance and bumpiness of the greens when we use the large tines in the spring. (Eastern Washington)

A: Greens aeration is done to relieve compaction, provide channels of sand for improved water infiltration, and assist in the removal of poor soil or excessive organic matter. If you have significant soil problems or layering problems that pose a threat

to the health of the turf and the quality of the putting surfaces, then twice-annual aeration with large tines could certainly be justified. If the

aeration is carried out as a routine preventative program on greens that are relatively free of problems, then perhaps your superintendent would agree to eliminate the spring treatment or consider a compromise of using small



tines in the spring to aid the greens while minimizing golfer complaints. The superintendent at your course will be able to provide the background information needed to make the best decision.

Q: How late into the spring should we allow our players to use winter rules? (Wyoming)



A: The best advice is to avoid playing winter rules if at all possible. Next best is to mandate playing the ball down when handicap postings are again accepted. While consistent playing

conditions may not be achievable each spring, the players will benefit most by playing golf as it is meant to be played — with the ball down.

Q: How low can ultradwarf bermudagrass be mowed? (Florida)

A: As part of the selection process with the ultradwarfs, the ability to tolerate a height of cut (HOC) of 0.125 inch was one of the criteria. Since their introduction, heights of cut as low as 0.085 inch have been maintained at a few courses. Golfer demands for faster

putting speeds have forced some superintendents to push the envelope as far as heights of cut. Also, egos can get in the way of sound agronomy when it comes to mowing heights. Discretion and good common sense still need to be exercised. When environmental conditions are

favorable to sustain active growth, the ultradwarfs can be successfully maintained at a HOC in the range of 0.110 to 0.125 inch. During periods of adverse weather and in particular low sunlight intensity, an elevated HOC should be practiced.