

Turf Twisters

Q: Our existing irrigation system is 25 years old and it has become very unreliable, so it has been recommended that we replace it. This seems to make good sense, but I question the recommendation to double the output of our pump station. Won't that just promote over-watering? (New York)

A: Surprisingly, having the ability to pump at a higher level may enable your superintendent to irrigate less. For example, if the course is dry and there is a threat of rain, having a limited pumping capacity may prompt your superintendent to water so as to avoid the extreme moisture stress that would

result if the rain does not materialize. If rain occurs, the result can be a saturated course that plays poorly and turf that is ripe for disease. On the other hand, having a high pumping capacity will enable your golf course superintendent to forgo irrigation, knowing that if the rain does not materialize,

the high-output system will allow him to apply enough water before play in the morning to avoid severe drought stress. It is counter-intuitive, but having a high-output system can actually allow superintendents to water less.

Q: We have several private carts at our course and allow one golfer per cart. Our golf course superintendent says this adds significant additional traffic and thus compaction to the course. He wants to do extra aeration. There may be more carts, but there is less weight in each cart. Can one golfer per cart really be detrimental? (Oklahoma)

A: Absolutely! The compaction factor is tremendously increased when individual carts are allowed. The weight per cart may be less, but compaction is greater with an increased number of carts. Concentrated traffic patterns and off-path "parking" tendencies at tees and greens



are worse for three or four carts versus only two. Two

golfers per cart should be the policy for all courses.

Q: Is painting a viable alternative to overseeding on ultradwarf putting greens? (Tennessee)



A: Yes! Painted greens offer many advantages, including avoidance of disruption for establishment and spring transition, and application of fewer pesticides and less water. Most of all, superintendents report better day-to-day putting conditions due to the opportunity to set the maintenance program up around the needs of just one turfgrass species.

