

Turf Twisters

Q: Why does the USGA Web site list only a few of the physical soil testing laboratories in the country? Isn't this biased against the labs that are not on the list? (Arizona)

A: The laboratories on the USGA Web site have achieved full accreditation with the American Association for Laboratory Accredi-

tion. Accredited labs undergo rigorous testing and inspections to ensure they provide the best information possible. They also work with the USGA to constantly try to improve laboratory testing procedures, which in turn benefits the entire industry. For these reasons, the USGA strongly recommends only accredited labs be used.



Q: Some members of my Green Committee feel that we should change hole locations on our greens on a daily basis. We have not done this in the past because we receive a low number of golf rounds during the week. Should we be changing holes every day? Any thoughts will be appreciated. (West Virginia)

A: The number of times hole locations are changed each week on a given golf course varies, the principal consideration being the level of traffic the greens receive. For daily play, the main purpose for changing the hole is to distribute traffic over the entire surface of the green to prevent wear

damage. Additionally, holes should be changed if they are damaged. After heavy play days, the holes should be changed to prevent wear to specific areas on the greens. Consider that if you change holes every day from May 1 to September 30, you will have approximately 150 *old holes* that will need to

heal. This can lead to more scalped, unsightly plugs and possible effects on putting quality. Lightly played courses generally change holes on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday, while heavily played courses usually change hole locations daily, depending on the size of the greens and other variables.

Q: I have heard that many courses add a layer of new bunker sand to their bunkers each spring. Is this a good way to prepare the bunkers for play each season? (Delaware)

A: The answer is, *probably not!* Capping the bunkers with new sand is more of a Band-Aid strategy than

correcting a bigger problem. However, there may be good reasons for adding a layer of sand: 1) top off a recently completed bunker renovation, 2) new drainage was installed and the sand finally settled, 3) more sand may be needed to achieve the proper uniform sand depth. If the bunkers drain poorly, are contaminated

with silt and clay, or contain improperly sized sand, then they should be renovated rather than capped with more sand. You are only delaying the inevitable by adding a light layer of sand. The bunker should be rebuilt if the internal drainage system is compromised or if surface drainage channels water into the bunker.

