

Turf Twisters



Q: My course has made a commitment to increase core aeration and surface top-

dress. Any suggestions on how we can monitor our progress? (Ohio)

A: Visual ongoing inspection of the profile is important to ensure that there is no layering, which in this case suggests topdressing rates that are out of sync with turf growth and aging. In addition, representative physical analysis tests every couple of years can be used to quantify aeration versus capillary pore space, along with the percentage of organic matter. Cross comparing future tests helps quantify progress or the lack

thereof. Over time there also should be a marked improvement in turf health/dependability. Finally, a Turf Advisory Service visit each year provides an outside perspective of the above factors (visual monitoring, physical analysis, and improved quality/dependability).

Q: I am the golf professional at a private club, and I'm looking to purchase ball mark repair tools to hand out to the membership to help maintain our greens. Which tool is the best at repairing with little damage while still being cost effective

to the club? Do you have any suggestions or advice on the proper tool? (Michigan)

A: The USGA does not evaluate or recommend brands of ball mark repair tools. Almost all of them

can be used effectively if golfers are shown how to use them correctly. There are several different types of ball marks, depending on the grass type, rootzone mix, soil moisture content, ball trajectory, and spin rate as it hits the green, etc. The

best thing you can do is to show your golfers how to repair the various types of ball marks with whichever tool you decide to go with. Generally speaking, expensive ball mark repair tools aren't any better than inexpensive tools.

Q: Our driving range tee remains in thin condition during the peak golfing season. What can we do to maintain dense turf coverage on our practice tee?

A: Practice teeing grounds receive a significant amount of play during the peak golfing season. Unless there is adequate teeing area to disperse play, the turf struggles to recover from continual

divot removal. Obviously, enlarging the tee area would be the best solution, but if this is not possible, several practices can be implemented to optimize turf recovery. Use as much teeing area as possible before shifting teeing lanes (see diagram). An artificial turf surface can be utilized between tee stall rotations to allow increased turf recovery. There have been advancements over the

years in playability, and the newer artificial tee mats are more realistic. Lastly, your club could limit the number

of golf balls given to each golfer to limit the divots taken and improve turf density.

