

Turf Twisters

Q: After three years of top-dressing the fairways, we have been able to build up a one-inch layer of sand over the original soil type. The results have been very positive, but including the expense in next year's budget has raised a few eyebrows. How much longer should we

continue the program? (Illinois)

A: Sand topdressing the fairways is a commitment and, unfortunately, abandoning it now would only negate the benefits you have worked so hard to achieve. If this process is stopped, severe



layering will ensue as thatch develops overtop the newly created sand profile. Although it may be possible to slightly reduce the annual topdressing rate to decrease the cost of the program, sand topdressing should not be abandoned.

Q: The putting greens at our course were rebuilt last year and overall everyone is pleased with the results. However, with the combination of a high-sand root-zone mix, a still immature turf, and hosting very heavy play, the edges of the holes literally fall apart or cave in each day. We understand that some courses in our area have used a plastic ring that is set on top of the hole liners to alleviate the prob-



lem until a more stable root-zone condition develops. Are these rings permitted under the Rules of Golf, and may scores made when using these rings be posted for USGA Handicap purposes? (Florida)

A: The rings you mention are liners, and the Rules of Golf treat them the same as the hole liners that hold the flagstick. The Committee in charge of the course is responsible for ensuring that all liners used in the hole are sunk at least one inch below the putting green surface, unless the nature of the soil makes it impracticable to do so — see Definition of "Hole" in the Rules of Golf. Until the rootzone matures

on your new putting greens, placing the rings on top of the hole liner is acceptable because the condition of the soil temporarily makes it impracticable to sink the liner an inch below the surface of the putting green. During the weeks or months that the rings are used to shore up the holes, players must continue to post all of their scores for Handicap purposes.

Q: Our club is very concerned about recent reports of a possible water shortage and how it will affect our golf course. What can we do to prepare for such a situation? (California)

A: Water shortages are likely to be an unfortunate reality for many courses in the southwestern U.S. Planning and preparation should focus on three main areas:

1. Develop a drought contingency plan: Designate which areas of the course receive the highest priority for irrigation applications (e.g., 1. greens, 2. green banks, 3. fairway landing zones, 4. remaining fairway areas, 5. tees, 6. trees and landscape, 7. rough).

2. Establish a formal irrigation best management practice document for the course: This is a formal

document that can be shared with water regulators as well as your golfers regarding the specific practices that are employed to maximize water use efficiency on your property. A step-by-step guide for developing an irrigation BMP by Dr. Bob Carrow, Dr. Ronny Duncan, and Dr. Clint Waltz is available at: <http://commodities.caes.uga.edu/turfgrass/>

georgiaturf/Publicat/BMP/BMP_06.pdf.

3. Maximize irrigation system efficiency: Every effort should be made to monitor the efficiency of your irrigation system and make necessary adjustments, including replacing sprinkler nozzles, repairing leaks, adjusting coverage, and taking advantage of the latest irrigation technology.

