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Turf Twisters

Q: What is the proper etiquette for playing through or around maintenance employees? (New Jersey)



A: Maintenance workers should be treated just as you would a group of golfers in front of you. When playing through, be absolutely sure they are adequately out of the intended line of play and are watching before you hit. If workers do not move out of the way, be patient. In all

likelihood, they are finishing up their task and will be out of the way shortly. Ultimately, put yourself in their shoes. Being courteous and waiting five or so extra minutes is well worth it to avoid the danger of hitting someone with a golf ball.

Q: I play at a fine old course that dates from the 1920s. A brand-new course was recently built in our area, and although I have always been pleased with my old course, the greens are much firmer, faster, and more consistently good on the new course. I never thought I would tire of my old course, but it just doesn't seem to play as well anymore. (Massachusetts)

A: I understand your complaint, but comparing the playability of a course built in the 1920s to a brand-new course built with modern techniques and planted with improved grasses is simply not a fair comparison. It is much like comparing the first personal computer with a top-notch new PC available today. They both may work well, but they have

infinitely different capabilities. The old course in your example likely has soil-based greens that have been top-dressed with sand. They may drain reasonably well, but their drainage would be inferior when compared to a green properly built to USGA putting green construction guidelines. Similarly, great progress has been made in turf breeding,

and the grasses currently available are superior to what was available just a few years ago with respect to wear, heat and drought tolerance, and disease resistance. Your old greens can play well, but they will not play as consistently as properly built and managed modern greens.

Q: I'm a good bunker player, but I am constantly frustrated by the fact that the sand in our bunkers is brand new, yet still is not consistent. Our superintendent says it's impossible to do. Can you prescribe a treatment that can help us achieve better consistency? (Indiana)

A: Bunkers are found throughout the golf course, and the different locations make it virtually impossible for them to play exactly the same. Golf is an outdoor game, and consistency is neither possible nor particularly desirable. Even identically designed and constructed bunkers will play differently due to differing exposures to sun, wind, rain, varying levels of play,

etc. We cannot recommend anything special aside from having the same sand in all of the bunkers and raking them in a similar fashion. Golfers must take some responsibility and adjust for playability

variations that will naturally occur.

