

A Unique Approach to Managing Players and Maintenance

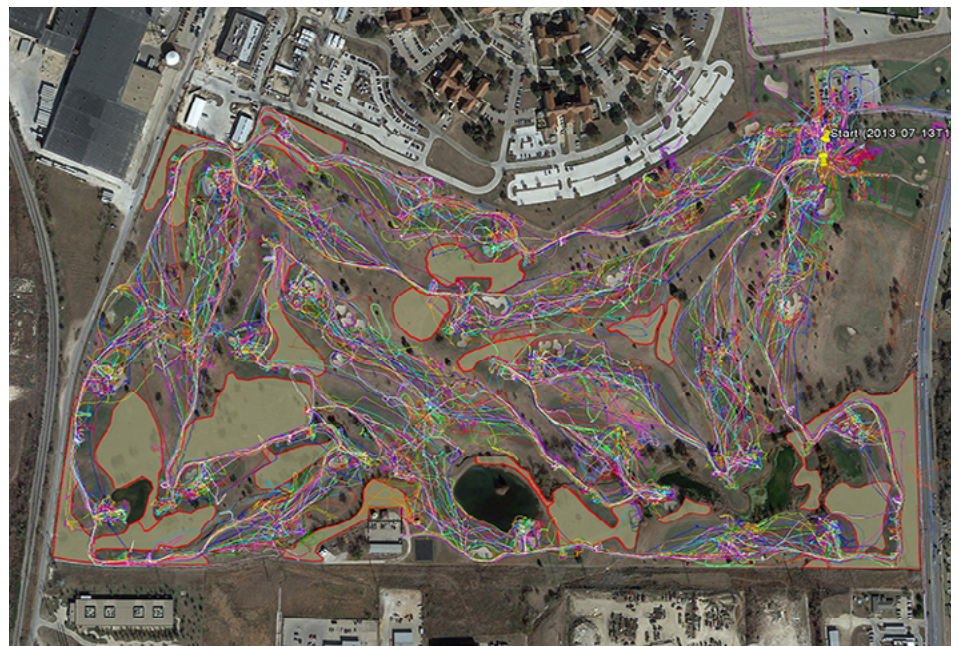
The USGA is calling on the talents and expertise of its staff to develop and implement programs and techniques to grow the game and help courses remain viable. The “[While We’re Young](#)” campaign and [Pace of Play Resource Center](#) are two examples of what is being done to impact the time it takes to play. Since the cost of playing the game is often a direct result of the cost to operate golf courses, reductions in major budget line items such as water, labor, fuel, energy, fertilizer, and pesticides can help keep facilities economically viable.

The USGA’s Green Section and Equipment Standards departments are actively engaged in a project that can help courses improve their pace of play, make significant reductions in the cost of golf course maintenance, and greatly reduce water use. GPS technology is being used to accurately identify how players of all skill levels move through the course. Doing so helps identify how to best implement changes in course setup, tee time intervals, and other factors that impact pace of play. The same technology can be used to refine course maintenance by accurately identifying areas that seldom come into play. Changing the maintenance of these areas can result in large reductions in water, labor, fuel, and mowing. The technology also is used to track maintenance equipment, allowing the computation of the cost of operation per unit area (e.g., how much time and fuel are consumed to mow an acre of fairway in one mowing pattern versus another), which, in turn, can help increase the efficiency of various maintenance tasks.

The use of GPS technology to analyze how courses are played and maintained is just one example of how the USGA is working to meet the challenges facing the game. Visit www.usga.org to see how these and other efforts are progressing.



On this course, the shaded areas were identified as areas that could be converted from normal turfgrass maintenance to low- or even no-maintenance. Doing so would result in significant reductions in water, labor, fuel, etc.



To ensure that such changes in maintenance do not adversely impact the pace of play, golfers were asked to carry GPS loggers in their pockets as they played their rounds. Knowing exactly how golfers move through the course allows the adjustments to be made in the shaded areas before any changes in course maintenance are implemented.