

TURF TWISTERS

THE TAS PROVIDES

Question: Our Turf Advisory Service (TAS) visit has become a high point of the golfing season. While this is a good point, there are so many people who want to attend the course tour that it has become difficult to address all of our needs and concerns without running short of time. Do you have any suggestions for making the most of our TAS visit? (Ohio)

Answer: First of all, prepare an itinerary prior to the TAS visit. The itinerary need not be extensive, but list the pertinent issues that need attention and discussion during the agronomist's visit. The list helps us focus on those issues during the visit and achieve the most efficient use of the scheduled time. There may be some value in limiting those allowed on the course visit to three or four people. An open session can then be scheduled for the last hour of the meeting to recap and deal with other issues and concerns that individual committee members bring forward. All of the issues will be reviewed and summarized in the written report the golf course receives after the TAS visit is made. For more ideas on making the most of your TAS visit, look at the following article on the Green Section portion of the USGA website: http://www.usga.org/green/tas/tas_visit.html.

A CREDIBLE RESOURCE

Question: During the recent GCSAA Conference and Show several of my fellow superintendents from the Midwest were discussing the possibility of an abnormally hot, dry summer season. Can the USGA point me in the direction of a credible source of long-range forecasting, given the ominous implications of such a weather pattern? (Iowa)

Answer: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was created in 1970 to, in part, develop a more comprehensive understanding of weather phenomena. They are a multivariied agency of the Commerce Department and are composed of the National Ocean Service, National Weather Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Environmental Satellite Data and Information Service, and Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research. Based on accurate predictions of the El Niño and La Niña events over the past three years, their long-range forecasting credibility has reached new heights. To assess the probability of a future drought in your location, visit their website at www.noaa.gov.

TO ALLEVIATE DIFFICULTIES

Question: We are having a great deal of difficulty finding open time to spray the course. Play volume is non-stop from morning until night, and the previously blocked Monday mornings have been opened to outings. Do you have any suggestions? (Kentucky)

Answer: When play volume increases to the point where needed maintenance work cannot be done, a red flag goes up. Obviously, if this continues the conditioning of the golf course will suffer and income/revenue will follow. Play volume should be limited to the point where needed maintenance work can be completed. Consider closing half or full day on Monday (or another day), spread tee times further apart, raise rates, or similar such combinations to better balance play volume with maintenance needs. Even the most passionate of bottom-line watchers must acknowledge the importance of guarding a solid foundation for the future. How the golf course is being maintained today is the future foundation.