Sonoma County
Fairgrounds Golf Course
"The Track within a Track"

November 2021 Newsletter

Tayman Park Golf Group Superintendent Pablo Rosales (left) sands the practice green as sprinklers (right) soak the sand in on our putting/chipping green

So why do we aerate our greens ???

We try to aerate all our greens at least once a year, which brings howls from some golfers. But anyone who operates a golf course knows that aerating is really the best way to maintain quality greens.

Showing up to a golf course only to discover that it has recently undergone an aerification process can be a jolt to the system. You were hoping the golf course, especially its greens, would be in great shape. Instead you find it full of little holes or covered in sand or other top-dressing. It's frustrating. And the aerification process can be especially frustrating to golfers when they don't understand why it's done.

Let the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America explain.

"Consider aerification a short-term disruption with long-term benefits for golf courses. Without those little (aerification) holes, greens would eventually die."

Stan Merkel spreads sand around on our putting/chipping green after it was punched, prior to seeding, fertilizing and watering in early October . . . The process made the greens slower for a

"Preventative maintenance is an integral part of successful golf course management. Golfers often view aerification as an inconvenience that takes the greens out of play for a day, pulling cores from the greens and leaving holes that can affect putting for many days before healing. But a golfer needs to understand how important aerification is to producing healthy turf."

"Aeration relieves soil compaction, provides a method to improve compaction and provides a method to improve the soil mixture around the green's roots;

"Good roots demand oxygen. In good soil, they get the oxygen from tiny pockets of air trapped between soil and sand particles.

"Over time, the traffic from golfers' feet (as well as mowing equipment) tends to compact the soil under the putting green— particularly when the soil contains a lot of clay. When soil becomes compacted, the air pockets on which the roots depend are crushed, and the roots are essentially left gasping for air. Without oxygen, the grass plants become weaker and will eventually wither and die."

"Aerification is a mechanical process that creates more air space in the soil and promotes deeper rooting, thus helping the grass plants stay healthy. In most cases, it's done by removing half-inch cores, allowing for an infusion of air and water that brings a resurgence of growth. The spaces are then filled with sand "top-dressing" that helps the soil retain air space and makes it easier for roots to grow downward.

GCSAA bottom line: "Aerification is a necessary practice. Before you curse the superintendent for ruining your day, think what greens will be like in the near future."

Short putts . . .

We are still working on solutions so we can re-open our practice green near the clubhouse, and we are also discussing once again offering our annual weekday green fee card, which has proven very popular.

Information will hopefully be available within a few weeks. Stay tuned . . .