



What's wrong with fast greens?

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Fast greens cost the game of golf and the environment.

Did you know that regular membership green speeds at many golf courses today *exceed national championship green speeds of only 10 or 20 years ago?*

That's right. Greens are being cut lower and lower to satisfy golfer demands for speed.

But mowing for speed comes at a cost to the game...and the environment. The next time the Stimpmeter dictates how greens at your favorite golf course are to be mowed, consider what's wrong with fast greens:

Fast greens slow down play!

Fast greens make it increasingly difficult to stop a golf ball close to the hole, especially on longer putts and when contours are present. It's even more difficult to play delicate pitch shots from around greens and stop the ball near the hole. Fast greens mean more putts and slower play.

Interesting hole locations are lost.

As greens become faster, certain portions of putting greens are no longer acceptable for a fair hole location. No one likes to see a missed putt roll back or a well-struck putt roll completely off a green when missing the hole. Much of the fun and excitement of a golf course is lost when only a few good hole locations result from limited setup possibilities.

Ball marks and old holes are slower to heal.

Ball marks have reached epidemic proportions at busy facilities. Failure to repair ball marks is reported to be the most common breach of golfer etiquette. But that's only part of the problem. Closer and closer mowing required for fast greens leaves less grass on greens to cushion the blow from incoming shots. It also takes the grass longer to recover from all those ball marks...which ultimately results in poorer putting quality.

Golf course setup is for a minority of players.

Fast greens cater to the minority of golfers who are the best players. Chip shots and longer putts are almost impossible for the average player, thereby diminishing the fun factor and slowing the pace of play for the majority of golfers. Golf is already a challenging game for the overwhelming majority of players; does it need to be made even more frustrating?

Fast greens put the emphasis on “championship,” rather than “fun.”

So many courses today are striving to provide so-called “championship” conditions on putting greens every day, rather than considering fun and enjoyable golf for all players. Sure, everyone wants to hit like a pro, but that’s in the swing, not in the grass. Golf is a game of strategy, three-dimensional positioning, and skill played outdoors with the same basic set of rules that have governed the sport for decades. Are we having more fun than our predecessors because our greens are faster?

Fast greens lead to poor turf.

Picture an inch on a ruler. Now picture one-eighth of an inch. That’s the height of the letters in this sentence. That’s the height that most greens are being mowed week after week, all season long. When grass is mowed at one-eighth of an inch (and sometimes less!), problems such as drought stress, moss, disease, winterkill, compaction, and daily wear are magnified. Combating these problems requires greater inputs of chemicals and labor, at cost to golfers and at potential risk to our environment.

Rather than placing emphasis on speed, focus on ***smooth and true playing surfaces***. Consistent, smooth, true surfaces promote good ball roll and fun golf.

The Stimpmeter was originally intended to be a gauge of consistency from green to green. Use it for that intended purpose, instead of getting fixated on speed. Get off the road to faster greens and get on the one that leads to good golf for all players, for the good of the game.

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