

# prairieview golf club



## Turf Notes from the Turf Care Center

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### *Bunker Renovations Complete on 15th Hole*

You may have noticed during one of your rounds in early June the work that was being completed on the greenside sand bunkers on the 15th hole. If you have played PrairieView a few times before, you are likely aware of the maintenance headaches these two bunkers presented following a moderate to heavy rainfall event. If these two traps were all that staff had to be concerned with following a washout rain event, the need to renovate the bunkers would probably not be as important as it is. However, there are 51 other sand bunkers spread out across the course, including two located near the pitching green at the practice center. Currently, three staff members can expect to spend the majority of a day putting the sand back in place and making the bunkers playable again after they have become washed out from rainfall. The goal of the project was to restore the bunkers back to a condition that would be playable before, during, and after almost any amount of rainfall. The result will be a more enjoyable round of golf that will also provide significant cost savings for the golf maintenance department.

To complete the renovation and test bunkers on the 15th hole, we chose to implement the Better Billy Bunker method in reconstructing the bunkers. The key to success of any bunker renovation is being able to provide sufficient drainage and the ability to keep sand in place on the flashed slopes of the bunker. Initially, a cloth liner like the Sand Trapper, was used as a synthetic liner to allow the water to pass through while keeping the sand in place. Over the years, staples used to hold the liner down would come loose and soon be caught by the machine raking the trap. The result is a compromised liner that would soon no longer do the job it was intended to do. At PrairieView, our bunkers were constructed following the standard method at the time, which was simply sand placed on top of the native soil with no lining system in place. That method has proven to provide an average of a 7-10 year lifespan. Our bunkers are in their 25th season and many are in need of a renovation. The most recent technology is the Better Billy Bunker, which has installations that are going on 10 years old that are still performing as advertised.

The Better Billy Bunker system involves the application of a polymer spray that is applied over the top of an evenly spread 2" layer of pea gravel. This combination dries to form a solid but permeable surface that will allow water to easily pass through and exit the bunker through the subsurface drainage tiles. Twenty-four hours after application, sand

is able to be reinstalled and the project is complete. These two traps are about as maintenance free as they can get. You may notice that initially these traps will play much softer than others on the course. This is due to new sand being installed. The sand we are using is an exact match to what exists in all the other bunkers. The only difference is sediment contamination that has occurred over the past 25 years in the other bunkers. As the two renovated bunkers mature, the sand will continue to firm up and more closely match the existing bunkers throughout the course. Throughout the end of the 2016 season, we will be monitoring the success of the project and hope to continue renovating other problem bunkers in 2017 and beyond. If you have any questions about this project or anything else happening out on the course, feel free to give me a call at 815-234-8535 ext. 211 or by e-mail at [matt@prairieviewgolf.com](mailto:matt@prairieviewgolf.com). You can also stay up to date on what we are doing by following my twitter feed @mph\_turf79 for updates on ongoing projects.

