



BUNKER LINERS ... IT REALLY WORKS!



Andrew H. Johnston (right).

If you are upgrading your golf course or are building a new course and not installing a bunker liner, you are missing the boat!

My old college professor the late Dr. Ken Payne from Michigan State University would quickly correct you and perhaps knock your grade back a mark for calling a Bunker a "sand trap" or "hazard". In his mind, no educated golf professional would use that slang. And likewise, no educated golf professional should build, renovate or maintain bunkers without a liner.

Bunkers have changed from being a hazard to a well-manicured high-end component of the golf course. Matter of fact golf courses are highly criticized for bunkers that are not consistent in texture, depth of sand, color and most importantly playability. The only way to control this is to install a bunker liner. There are many types of liners and several materials that claim to protect bunkers however, the type that works best are a lobed geotextile matrix such as SandMat.

SandMat is in place in the bunkers at Sentosa, the home of the Singapore Open. During the Barclays Singapore Open last year a weather event during the middle of the third round occurred. This event would have been devastating to many golf courses dumping 100 Ml or 4 inches of rain in less than an hour. This would have crippled courses without bunker liner installed. Sentosa, however, which has extremely high flashed bunkers, escaped the severe storm with little to no damage to the bunkers. Peter Downie, the Director of Golf and event host, would have been forced to extend the event to Monday if the bunkers were not armored with SandMat liners holding the sand in place. The destruction would have been so wide spread it would have taken the remainder of the day to repair the bunkers. In this case



BUNKER MAINTENANCE



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however, shortly after the rain event ended the golf course maintenance staff was able to run through the golf course removing the standing water from fairway areas and greens and the event was back on track.

This type of bunker liner is porous. The matrix surface will hold the sand in place during a weather event while at the same time allowing water to run through a channel created behind the sand.

Size and spacing of high tenacity fibers selected to create stability and to prevent contamination of the matrix itself and the drainage system.

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quickly as silts blend with the sand and clog, resulting in reduced drainage and tighter, firmer sands which reduce playability and consistency.

All bunkers are different in shape, varying in slope, size of area and depth of sand. Without a liner they will fail sooner, in many cases in less than three years requiring a major overhaul which is expensive and inconvenient.

Renovations are disruptive, reduce revenue and eat deeply into golf maintenance budgets. In today's economic environment, there is no room for preventable repair.

