

PROVEN PERFORMANCE

SILENCE SAYS IT ALL

ENHANCED PLAYABILITY

Raking bunkers for aesthetics and playability has always been a bit of a balancing act for Crooked Stick Golf Club superintendent, Jake Gargasz.

These days though, he and his crew have been able to focus their efforts solely on bringing out their bunkers' beauty.

As part of bunker renovations that began in 2014 and wrapped in 2015, Gargasz decided to fill the 92 bunkers on the renowned Pete Dye-designed course with Best Sand Tour Grade Signature Blend. The change in sand has made the task of raking 120,000 square feet of bunkers less time consuming than ever before.

"The part I like about the sand is that it's pretty self-sufficient," says Gargasz, whose crew rakes bunkers two or three times a week depending on maintenance schedules. "It never hardens to the point where you are out there raking it to make sure it is playable

regardless of whether rain beats it down or anything like that. You are still getting your club through without feeling like you are hitting hardpan."

After studying the sand at 2014 PGA Championship site, Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville, Ky., Gargasz settled on the Tour Grade Signature Blend from Best Sand. He knew that the proper sand "can make or break" a bunker project; and the blend didn't disappoint. The resulting silence from players was a sure sign he'd found the ideal match for Crooked Stick.

"Once we put in the new sand, it not only helped us from a maintenance standpoint to give a better product, but it also doesn't require as much of our time," Gargasz says. "That

has been huge on our part. On top of that is enjoyment and satisfaction from the membership. It used to be a daily occurrence to hear a complaint about a bunker because it was either too hard or too soft, or this, that or the other thing. I don't have any comments now. From my standpoint, no comments are good comments. For me, that's in a nutshell how I look at it."

Crooked Stick's rebuilt bunkers, with enhanced drainage and new sand, ultimately allowed the course to survive the downpour during the BMW Championship. It was the third leg of the PGA Tour's FedEx Cup Playoffs, and the first time they had returned to Carmel, Ind. since 2012. Though the course got 3 inches of precipitation, delaying play

on Thursday and Saturday, the tournament was able to finish on Sunday without a single complaint from the world's best players.

"From my experience, once the rain hits, {sand} kind of locks up until you get that initial rake going," Gargasz says. "And that's definitely the part I like the best about this sand. It still plays the same whether it's dry or wet. It has consistency from bunker to bunker and also day to day."

IN BUNKER MAINTENANCE

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