



## On The Road With The USGA—April 2008

By Bob Brame, regional director, Central Region

**April 1, 2008**

It's opening day for the Cincinnati Reds, the final four in college basketball has been determined, and warming soil temperatures have resulted in enough growth for mowers to be fired up and put to work on golf courses in the more southern part of the North Central Region. At courses further north the cold continues to hold back growth, and even where mowing has been initiated it is sporadic. The gradual changeover from winter to spring is actually a good thing since it is important for turfgrass to acclimate.

Golfers sometimes get frustrated with the seemingly slow process, but then so do golf course superintendents. No one wants a well-conditioned course more than the person charged with its maintenance. Early spring is a good time to pause and remember that golf is played outdoors and there are limits to what can be achieved. Superintendents must work with weather patterns, limited budgets, and design features to present a course upon which the game can be played - a complex combination and a quantum leap beyond maintaining a home lawn.

The amount and frequency of putting surface topdressing should be fitted to aging and growth—if you're mowing you should be topdressing. Consistency with topdressing over time pays dividends. Now is the time to make sure that putting surface topdressing at your course is properly charted for 2008.

It's still a bit too early for putting surface aeration unless your program involves multiple late summer, fall, and spring treatments. The process of removing aeration plugs and filling the channels with topdressing sand should ideally be done when growth is consistent (mowing with clipping removal daily) so that recovery will be quick. The ideal spring window ranges from mid to late April in the southern part of the region to mid or late May further north. This is a general window and weather conditions must be considered. As such, all aeration work

should include a scheduled target date and an alternate date one or two weeks later.

Courses that need to aggressively modify the upper root zone profile may have three, four or even five core aerations on the calendar during any one year, but don't forget to schedule an alternate date for each. If your course is floundering with aeration needs, give us a call. While it can be an emotional topic it also is a vital component of quality golf turf conditioning - frequency and timing do matter.

Pink snow mold disease has been active on courses due to the cool, wet weather over the last couple of weeks. Check out the following link as you consider control strategies:

[The Ohio State University Buckeye Turf](#) .

Whether it is disease control, aeration, topdressing, mowing, operating budget, politics or managing weather patterns we're here to assist with any and all aspects of your course's maintenance operation. An onsite visit every year is the best way to establish and maintain a team relationship that maximizes the benefit to your operation. Give us a call or drop an email to discuss scheduling.

Source: Bob Brame

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