



## On The Road With The USGA—October 2008

By Bob Brame, regional director, Central Region

### October 3, 2008

For most of the lower North Central Region it has been a fairly dry September. The biggest weather issue has been the remnants of hurricane Ike, which inflicted significant power outages and tree loss damage throughout the region. Half of the courses visited the week following the high winds were operating with no power. Several superintendents were scrambling following the power loss to secure generators for their pump station. While watering needs have not been intense, the sunny skies and low humidity have combined to necessitate some watering. No doubt the debris cleanup will extend well into the winter and for some on into next spring. Prolonged seventy to seventy-five mile per hour gusts of wind and mostly sunny skies is not a combination commonly experienced.

Speaking of wind damage from the remnants of hurricane Ike, Mark Wilson and his staff at Valhalla did a superb job of reversing what the winds disrupted only two days before the start of this year's Ryder Cup. The USA triumph was icing on the cake, but few will fully understand all that went on behind the scenes to set the international stage. If your course was hit hard by the winds be sure to set realistic expectations over the coming fall with regards to taking on additional projects. Routine maintenance, which clearly includes aeration, is a higher priority than projects. The wind damage for many has forced a postponement in projects so that routine maintenance and cleanup are not compromised.

Recent visits have exposed significant grub damage or actually damage from animals digging up the grubs. In most cases the damage is occurring where no insecticide was applied; however, there are a few cases where preventative applications were made and yet some damage is occurring. This does not necessarily mean that the insecticide failed.

Are you thinking about skipping putting surface aeration this fall to appease golfers? After all, play is down and you don't want to push away or discourage the golfers you have, and the weather has been fairly mild this season - the course looks real good right now. Bad Idea! Complete skipping of aeration is a very bad idea and pushing the work into late fall will definitely compromise the agronomic benefits. Hopefully, most reading this update are at courses where putting surface aeration has already been completed. If not, do the work as soon as possible. Remember, the work done to the course this fall will set the tone for how it comes through next season, especially if we experience a harsh weather pattern. Putting surface aeration might cause some minor short-term inconvenience, but thin, weak or dead turf will really push 'em away. Golfers that are open-minded will ultimately appreciate preventative measures that protect quality/dependability down-the-road.

Keep in mind, there is still time to get in a visit at your course before winter weather. Call or email anytime to schedule a visit or to simply discuss a concern or pass on an observation.

Source: Bob Brame

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