



## Transitioning

By Bob Brame, regional director, North-Central Region

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As we move from the harsh winter into the early spring season, golf courses throughout the lower North Central Region (Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio) are considering options for improving rough quality. For a significant number, the 2010 season and extended dry fall compromised rough density and prevented much-needed recovery prior to winter. Budgeting for added seed, fertilizer and labor will allow most to reestablish the desired quality prior to summer. That is, if reasonably-spaced spring rainfall cooperates. A few operations are planning to sod portions of the more in-play areas. Growth and filling-in are directly tied to soil temperatures, which means patience will be needed, and be sure to control traffic until complete recovery occurs. Aggressively communicating these points will be vital to blocking negative politics.



There have been no reports of winter injury in the lower North Central Region as opposed to further north, but it's still early – the next few weeks will present a more complete picture. The full impact of recent flooding also is in the process of being sorted out. Let us know of any problems at your golf course.

*'Can we play, is the course open?'*

It's always great to hear that players are eager to get out and play, especially with the lingering economy, but a little caution at this time of year will improve turf health moving into the season. In fact, a little caution now will actually improve dependability during the summer months. Spring root growth directly impacts

quality and dependability when tough summer weather hits. To reasonably guard root growth and overall plant health:

1. Do not allow play on frosted turf, and
2. Do not allow play when frozen soil in the root zone blocks the staff's ability to change holes in greens.

Allowing surface frost to melt prior to player traffic typically involves only a short delay. Root zone thaw can take longer, and is more difficult to communicate because there are no visible indicators. Nonetheless, golfers following the superintendent's recommendation can pay dividends through the season ahead.

#### *Poa annua* Seedheads

If blocking *Poa annua* seed heads is part of your maintenance package, it all comes down to product selection and timing. Monitoring growing degree days can greatly aid timing. Check out the tracker at <http://www.gddtracker.net/>. Enter your zip code and select the appropriate category to consider growing degree days.

The Green Section is your nonbiased source of golf course maintenance information.

Source: Bob Brame

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