



2010 Extends Into 2011

By Bob Brame, regional director, North-Central Region

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No April fool's joke - the harsh 2010 season was well documented with most courses experiencing some level of turf weakening or loss. Unfortunately, for some, the impact of a difficult 2010 season extends into 2011.



For many courses in the lower North Central Region, the harsh 2010 summer weather brought significant and widespread loss of grass in the rough. This was followed by a very dry fall, and since most courses do not have adequate irrigation in the rough, the extended dry weather pattern blocked seeding efforts to recover from the summer's losses. The thinned rough turf is glaring this spring.

What to do if this combination applies to your course:

1. **Start by communicating the issue.** There will be added costs, over and above the normal operating budget, to facilitate the needed recovery. Also, there will likely be some inconvenience to play during the restoration, or at least playability may be different from past years.
2. **Decide if seeding, sodding or simply encouraging existing plants to spread offers the best option.** With either seeding or sodding there will be a vulnerability to decline during the heat of the first summer. Planting requires careful management throughout the spring and summer, along with associated added costs. Seeding also brings the likely need to make select herbicide applications to remove weeds that establish along with

the desired grass plants. Encouraging existing plants via fertilization, select herbicide applications, and careful watering may allow enough recovery to set the stage for more efficient seeding in late summer.

Each of the three options has advantages and disadvantages, depending upon the course specifics. An onsite Turf Advisory Service (TAS) visit can be scheduled to facilitate this decision and zero in on specific components, which will no doubt be a blend of agronomics (grass or grasses to be used, possible herbicide usage, fertilization, etc.), economics and politics. Additional resources can be found at the following links:

[Part I: Spring Seeding Options](#)

[Part II: Preemergence and postemergence herbicides for crabgrass control in newly seeded areas](#)

[Part III: Controlling broadleaf weeds in newly seeded areas](#)

[Clean Seedbeds are Possible!](#)

3. **Where possible, minimize equipment traffic (maintenance equipment and cart) where turf recovery is being pursued.** With no vehicle traffic, combined with players walking into the area, lifting their ball and dropping outside of the renovation site, it will speed recovery.
4. **Regardless of which option is pursued in #2, plan on extra spot seeding, fertilization and weed control in late summer/early fall.** The intent is to ensure that the 2010 loss does not linger into yet another season.

We are actively scheduling TAS visits for the season ahead. If you have not yet scheduled a visit for your course, now is a good time to call or email. Green Section agronomists are your unbiased source of golf turf maintenance information with your course's best interest in mind. We look forward to working with you.

Source: Bob Brame

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[Information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service](#)

[Contact the Green Section Staff](#)