



## Traffic And Trees—The Drought Continues To Impact Courses Throughout The Region

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Concentrated traffic on drought-stressed turf is a combination that invariably results in unsightly damage to turfgrass areas. If this combination is allowed to persist for too long, the complete loss of grass is a good possibility. While all grasses are susceptible to this type of damage, courses with roughs planted to cool-season grasses have been particularly hard hit this summer.

To distribute traffic over a much wider area several courses have adopted a "gate" system located in the ingress/egress points of golf holes. Notice in the photo that it is easy to see the wear pattern that occurred from a single day's play. Notice the wear patterns outside versus inside of the stakes. This shows how effective this traffic control technique is working. The stakes are easily moved by the staff making it possible to frequently redirect golf carts and maintenance vehicles. And, while the problem might be most obvious on cool-season grasses during the summer, remember that traffic-worn bermudagrass and zoysiagrass is much more susceptible to injury in the winter, particularly if the drought continues.

Random tree loss is a huge issue on all courses in the Midwest this year due to drought over the last two years. For the most part, trees located within the reach of irrigation system are surviving. However, sprinklers designed for the irrigation of turfgrass are only partially effective when it comes to providing water for trees and cannot completely overcome the near total absence of rainfall. Tree species such as



pinus, red oaks, cypress and cedars have less drought tolerance and have suffered the most. As a result, many courses are developing their plans for the removal of severely damaged trees this winter. While planting replacement trees is a good idea it is important to hold off until soil moisture levels have risen enough to support the limited root system of a 'balled and burlapped' tree.



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