



Dew The Right Thing

By Bob Vavrek, regional director, Central Region | July 21, 2017



Scalping injury to cool-season turf that occurs during the heat of summer can linger well into fall before recovery occurs.

It should come as no surprise that bad things can happen when golfers are allowed to dictate agronomic practices. A classic example of this unfortunate scenario recently occurred at a facility where golfers immediately wanted a path of short grass mown from the tees to the fairways, commonly called a dew walk. However, while dew walks may help keep the socks of early morning golfers dry as they walk from tee to fairway, they offer no refuge from heavy dew when golfers otherwise have to traverse roughs to play their next shot, enter a bunker or navigate to and from a putting green.

Creating a dew walk required mowing a strip of 2.5-inch, cool-season rough to approximately half its height. Needless to say, the turf did not appreciate this sudden transformation during the peak months of heat stress. It only took a few days for the new dew walks to turn a sickly shade of brownish orange, indicating severely scalped grass.

Unfortunately, the injury will likely linger for the rest of summer until cooler temperatures arrive. The damage could even become worse if a long stretch of stressful weather occurs. On a positive note, turf loss in a dew path should not affect playability. However, it does serve as a daily reminder about the importance of altering the mowing height of turf in slow, measured steps. Grass in the dew walks would have acclimated to a lower height of

cut with much less stress if the change was made gradually during the cooler months of early spring or fall.

As they say, “Grass grows slowly but dies quickly.”

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