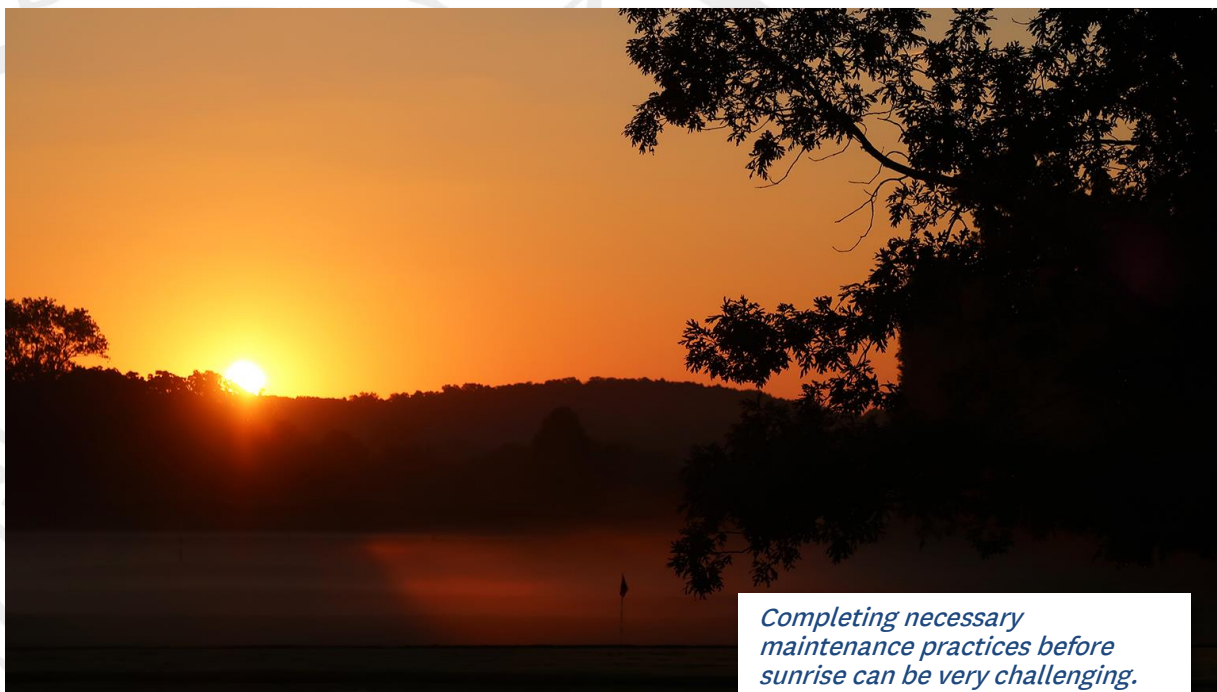




## Avoiding Night Blindness

By Zach Nicoludis, agronomist, Central Region | September 1, 2017



**M**any superintendents schedule maintenance start times at sunrise to avoid issues with limited visibility. During most of the season, the sun rises early enough to provide sufficient daylight for completing daily maintenance practices ahead of golfers. However, if tee times are not adjusted as days get shorter, agronomic teams must either work in the dark for prolonged periods or attempt to complete golf course preparations in a smaller time window.

Losing daylight every day after the summer solstice in June eventually catches up with agronomic teams in August and September. At this time, staff often must work in total darkness to stay ahead of early tee times. Additionally, it is common for golf courses to lose employees during this time of year as high school and college students return to school. When staff and time are limited playing conditions are likely to be affected.

LED lights can be added to equipment for improved visibility, but they only help to a limited extent. The probability of not spotting a problem increases when maintenance practices are performed for longer periods in the dark. These issues could be something as minor as unraked footprints in a bunker or more serious problems such as a hydraulic leak that can cause significant turf damage.

Several maintenance practices cannot be performed without adequate daylight. Adjusting tee times to account for later sunrises will reduce strain on maintenance staffs as they prepare for daily play. In turn, golfers will benefit from higher-quality playing conditions and fewer disruptions.

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