



## Managing Expectations in 2011

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The last Mid-Atlantic update was titled “What’s Under All That Snow and Ice?” Warmer temperatures have allowed the question to be answered in much of the region. Overall, what we have seen and heard regarding putting green turf is positive. While it is too early to tell exactly how the grass will fare in the coming weeks, but our opinion is -- so far, so good. That’s the good news. The bad news is that another arctic blast sent temperatures into the low single digits in parts of the region. This is a cause for concern after the series of days that saw daytime temperatures in the 50’s and 60’s. Recent research on winter injury to *Poa annua* suggests that even a short period of warmer temperatures can rapidly reduce winter hardiness of this grass. As for creeping bentgrass, there is little concern for any winter damage on this more winter-hardy grass.



On a completely different topic, a recent walk around a local golf course raised some questions about improving the quality of rough. The goal is to develop a maintenance plan that promotes rough that is more uniform with limited off-type grasses and weeds. The rough should be more visually appealing and offer improved playability. Of course, all of these improvements must be accomplished without disrupting the golf course or having any significant short term reduction in playability. This specific discussion brought to mind a great challenge as we head towards another growing season: expectations and desire for improvement, perhaps with limited resources (budget).

It is not too early to make a very important point for 2011. Expectations need to be managed. Better rough, better bunkers or better whatever will not come without some inconvenience and extra costs on the golf course. If having the best of everything, or at least having everything just right, was easy, every golf course would have everything just the way the golfers wanted it. However, when a *problem* is present, it often did not develop overnight. Similarly, these problems will not be fixed overnight, either. The golf course that maintains a high level of conditioning has invested in their golf course maintenance operations and the infrastructure of the golf course. Very few dramatic improvements come without investment and some level of inconvenience.

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