

## New Year, New Resolutions

By David Oatis, regional director, Northeast Region | January 19, 2018



*Winter wonderland or an ice skating rink: which do you have and how healthy is your turf?*

Gyms and fitness studios are packed these days as many have resolved to turn over a new leaf and get healthier. However, the crowds will probably start to dwindle in a few weeks as resolve gradually fades. Some believe that it's a bad idea to make New Year's resolutions because they so rarely are adhered to. I think the key to success is making positive, yet realistic, resolutions.

- Superintendents:
  - Be positive because moods are contagious. One person in a sour mood can bring everyone else down to their level. There are plenty of things to be negative about; but people come to a golf course to have fun, don't ruin it for them. Besides, no one wants to hear negativity anyway.
  - Evaluate your programs fairly and don't be afraid to change if there is good reason to do so – i.e., better results or saving money. Don't fall into the trap of making changes for the sake of changing. A wise turf professor told me many years ago: "Don't be the first and don't be the last to try something new." It's still good advice today.
  - Walk the course. Even walking a few holes every day is worthwhile. You'll see things that you might miss if you stay in a cart.

- Golfers:
  - Be positive and resist the urge to look for things that bother you. If you see a problem, bring it to the key facility decision makers instead of taking it to the grill room.
  - Be realistic about your game and don't blame the golf course for a bad round.
  - Walk the course, even if it's just a few holes. The exercise will do you good and you'll see more nature.
  - Embrace the fact that course conditions change. Golf is an outdoor game and conditions are supposed to change. Variety is one of golf's greatest attractions and a key part of the game's challenge.
  - Remember that golf is a game and enjoy it.
- Get healthy:
  - I know it's a stretch for some of us – especially coming from someone who gets out of breath tying his shoes these days – but what set of resolutions doesn't address health? Health affects attitude, and attitude affects performance.
  - Read a book on a subject other than golf or turf. Taking a break from thinking about golf and starting the new year refreshed will help your attitude and improve performance.

#### Winter Weather Concerns:

Recent extreme weather has created concern about the health of bermudagrass in the transition zone and *Poa annua* in northern areas. Low temperatures, desiccating winds, freeze-thaw cycles and icing events have occurred throughout the Northeast Region. No turf injury has been documented to date; but if you have concerns, pull plugs and incubate them. Documenting turf health now may ease concerns and help you make informed decisions later this winter. If you have questions or concerns about turf health, reach out to a [USGA Agronomist](#) to talk things over.

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