

## EDITORIAL

A recent article concerning irrigation of golf course turf sparked some thoughts about the subject of which we as golf course superintendents are daily contending with. July and August usually are the most critical months, night time temperatures remain warm and usually humid and days are always hot. Poa Annua becomes a minute by minute thought passing through the mind, to the point where you start talking to it and believe it is listening to you. Water management becomes a most important function during these periods. I believe a large portion of our water management decision making lies with the desires of the golfing membership. We know what is necessary to provide green, playable fairways; adequate water application to maintain healthy grass, but firm enough to give a well hit drive plenty of roll; but healthy enough that wherever it stops rolling, it has a perfect lie. I guess there is but two alternatives our memberships have; a green wet fairway, or a brown dry one.

Heavy soils that drain poorly require that special touch or what is called T.L.C. (Tender Loving Care). Too much water is easy to apply, thus are we watering to keep the driest spot green? To maintain uniformity becomes the most sought after goal, considering that nature, a very un-uniform creature is our sidekick. Applying water with sprinklers is subject to wind; soil density and structure vary throughout the course, meaning some soil will accept water and clay won't; traffic and subsequent compaction patterns are not uniform; and of course the types of grasses vary all over the course. Deep root penetration means healthier turf, but water must be below the roots for the roots to grow down. Here is where the decision making lies - if the water applied does not penetrate through the root zone and deeper, do we continue to water until this is achieved, or let the grass come under stress? If we water to totally penetrate the dry area, the sure result is an over-wet playing condition around the remaining area. This wet area is then subject to compaction; but, has this been truly noticeable and detrimental to the fairway turf? During rainy weather periods we have had to continue to mow fairways with compacting gang units. Aerifying, thatching, spiking and normal management practices have helped alleviate compaction.

Let's let the grass come under stress. First of all, Poa Annua begins to wilt, sparsely it begins to die; bentgrasses survive, only because of deeper root systems, but still wilt; this surely is not promoting root development, there isn't any moisture for the roots to strive for. The stressed area gets worse with traffic and carts; with morning and evening traffic the grass usually recovers, it's that mid-day cart driving through the stressed area, you will see those tracks the rest of the season. Also, think back a few years on that same stress area, usually it will be quite slow to recover the following spring, if it recovers at all. And if it does come back, it will be the first problem area as soon as hot weather hits, and probably increase in size. Also, localized dry spots seem to pop up all over stressed areas, and it seems to be the first place fairy ring shows itself. Not many positive remarks for leaving grass in a stressed condition. T.L.C. becomes the only solution, finding yourself devoting all your time and money babysitting these areas through the summer.

During the months of July and August, frequent light applications of water seem to provide the best result from an aesthetic and a playing point of view. However, Superintendents have in the past and will continue in the future to satisfy the demands of the golfing world. Grass tennis courts have not withstood the test, I wonder if we are asking mother nature to give above and beyond the call of duty for the game of golf.

Anonymous



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