

A REVIEW OF PROTECTIVE MEASURES

Techniques and procedures that protect, avoid and correct the damage that occurs in late winter-early spring are well known to and understood by the golf course superintendent. For the most part, protective measures relate to production of a healthy vigorous grass and to the control, to the extent possible, of the soil-plant environment. When these factors are adversely impacted by anomalous conditions of weather, poor construction or inadequate equipment and supplies, the responsibility for loss of turfgrass must be shared.

I. To Protect Against Temperature Variations

1. Apply sound cultural practices in the fall of the year. This would include properly timed application of balanced **fertilizer**; **cultivation** of compacted areas and of such areas as slopes where water infiltration is poor; controlled application of **water** - to ensure satisfactory soil moisture, **mowing** in accordance with growth requirements - raise height of cut on areas known to be susceptible to desiccation; implementation of disease control programs at the proper time - fall and spring. (Programs to control or eliminate **insects**, **weeds** and thatch would have been implemented at earlier date.)

2. Control traffic, especially during critical periods.

3. Use mulches or covers if warranted.

4. If late winter-early spring play is anticipated, cut cups in the fall and fill with newspaper.

5. Cut temporary greens if needed.

6. Work toward elimination of *Poa annua*.

7. Develop programs to introduce new improved grasses as they become available. Seed greens lightly each fall to help eliminate *Poa annua*.

8. Avoid practices that stimulate excessive early growth or that produce soft succulent growth in early spring.

9. Apply fungicides as needed.

II. To Protect Against Traffic

1. Develop programs to control traffic during critical times and on critical sites.

2. Enlist support of all golfers.

3. Take pictures of damage and make presentation to green committee and membership.

III. To Protect Against Ice Sheets and Ponded Water

1. Improve drainage.

2. Redesign and rebuild if necessary.

3. Leave snow as insulator as long as possible.

4. Apply dark material (Milorganite) to ice sheets to make them porous.

5. Mechanically break up solid (non-porous) ice sheets if temperatures range into 50's or greater for extended periods.

6. Apply fungicides as needed.

IV. To Protect Against Limited Soil Water

1. Water in the fall as late as is needed to ensure good fall and winter supply of soil moisture.

2. Use covers and mulches to protect vulnerable sites.

3. Plant superior permanent grasses.

4. Apply those cultural practices needed to ensure adequate storage of food reserves and that develop deep rooted, extensively branched grass plants.

5. Apply water to counteract desiccating conditions - haul if necessary.

6. Apply fungicides as needed.

7. Avoid all practices that stimulate early excessive growth or that produce soft, succulent growth.

By **J. R. Watson, Vice-President, The Toro Company**
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