



Kevin Czerkies, CGCS
Sportsman's C.C.

Fall is finally here, This is my favorite season. The days are shorter, the weather is refreshing, and the color of leaves can be breathtaking. With frosty mornings, golf rounds are dropping off, and many of our seasonal help have Mexico on their minds.

I find it hard to believe that golfers forget about frost from year to year. I've had the same golfers teeing off at daybreak for years, yet when we get that first fall frost, they've forgotten about that dreaded "Frost Delay." The most common reply I hear from the golfers is, "How can you possibly have frost when the thermometer at the bank says it's 41° F?"

For some reason, I feel like I'm getting some sort of revenge against these early morning golfers. Instead of my maintenance crew mowing the first couple of greens in the dark to stay ahead of the onslaught of golfers, I now have the power of telling these golfers when they can get off (the tee, that is). This is a feeling that I'm sure is only experienced by superintendents at public courses.

Besides frost, another fall disturbance to golfers is "Aerification." Many of us should be completing our aerification about this time. I've found that the use of solid tines drastically reduces the amount of complaints. I've been solid tining my fairways for several years now. The main reason for using the solid tines is the complaints that are associated with the mess left behind when hollow tines are used. A few years ago, I core-aerified fairways, destroyed the plugs, and dragged them back into the surface. The next morning, with the fairways wet from a heavy dew, the first few groups of daybreak-playing golfers picked mud from their shoes, marched to the pro shop and demanded their money back. We all know that aerifying is essential for quality turf growth, but I felt like the villain because we had upset golfers. I've also found that solid tining greatly reduces labor costs because there is virtually no cleanup of plugs.

We all enjoy the beautiful fall leaf colors, but with it comes our responsibility of cleaning them up when they do finally fall. I'm fortunate enough that my course has many different types of trees, and they all don't drop their leaves at the same time. This enables us to keep up with the cleanup.

For many of us, fall also means course construction. Large projects can be disruptive to the golf course, but most are necessary for the well-being and playability of our courses. Whether you are only constructing a forward tee or replacing an irrigation system, many hours of planning meetings go into the effort. It's nice to watch and to supervise the project as it moves from paper to reality. I personally like doing course construction projects because it usually means

the finished product will cure one of my headaches.

We are down to our last golf meeting for 1998. I'm sure that's sweet music to Brian Bossert's ears. The 2-man scramble/college championship will be played at Seven Bridges this year. If you've never played Don Ferreri's course, I urge you to sign up for this event. It's one of the top public courses in the Chicago area. Remember, you don't have to be competing on a college team to participate in this event. Feel free to sign up as a single and compete for prizes as part of a 2-man scramble team. Brian will pair you with another single. So come on out and enjoy some of the fall colors at Seven Bridges.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Czerkies". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kevin Czerkies, CGCS
President, MAGCS