

MIDWEST BREEZES

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"2012 Golf Season.....Really?"

To coin one of my favorite contemporary expressions that seems to convey the confusion, recognition and sarcasm of unanswerable questions, statements or events is the word... **really?** One of the great things about this statement is you can add inflections as you see fit to change the meaning. Fun stuff, try it.

The 2012 golf season got started for many operations in January with unusually warm, record setting temperatures. This trend continued into February as the warm weather and lack of snowfall continued. The turf remained unfrozen and the golfers continued to play well past the usual thaw that allows Christmas presents to be unleashed for the first time in our Northern climate. For many operations the economic windfall of collecting green fees and cart revenue during the winter was a much needed boost...**really?**

March temperatures peaked in the 80's. Golfers were coming out in droves. Soil temperatures were increasing to the point where the turf began a premature growth flush. The players seemed to think that just because the temperatures were "like" June, the course conditions should also be like June. Unfortunately for many maintenance operations, many of the staff were still out of town and courses were still trying to wrap up winter projects. Superintendents found themselves short manned and a whole lot of work to do...**really?**

The early warm spring soil temperatures threw any calendar based spray scheduling out the window. Monitoring growing-degree days became the only accurate way to figure out product timing. Attempting to time pre-emergents for crabgrass control and seed-head suppression products became a challenge to make it work...**really?**

The early warm up also "stoked" the broadleaf weeds to begin to make their "charge" (As if we didn't have enough to do). High wind conditions for most of the spring made it a difficult challenge to get out and spray weeds...**really?**

The early spring has also seemed to also disrupt the turf industry chemical/fertilizer supply chains. Everyone needed everything NOW and distributors are playing "catch up."...**really?**

We just recently got a much needed shot of rainfall. Prior to that courses were "firing up" irrigation systems early, running full irrigation watering cycles, applying wetting agents and hand watering hot spots on greens with hoses. This is supposed to be our rainy season...**really?**

Some savvy Superintendents were able to get out extra early and complete their spring green core aerifications with one course I know, completing the process in February!...**really?**

Without question this 2012 year has been one unusual season so far, (massive understatement...**really?**) There are not many weather forecasters who are willing to go out on a limb and predict what the 2012 summer will be like. It would be nice to have a crystal ball or be all knowing like the great and powerful Wizard of Oz. Such is not the case, so we will do what we usually do. Prepare for the worst and hope for the best. Ladies and Gentlemen, good luck and play well. **-OC**

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