

Happy New Year to one and all, and welcome to the middle of our “winter season” here in Florida! That time of year when our northern members have retreated from the ice and snow to join with thousands of others who flock to our courses in the winter to make it our “busiest season.”

I keep using the word “season” because my attention was brought to focus on that word last October. I had the good fortune

to be invited to speak at the Wisconsin GCSA Turf Symposium in Milwaukee and got to meet a lot of northern superintendents.

Season?

WHAT Season?

I overheard several congratulating each other as they celebrated the end of another “golf season.”

I thought to myself, “We have hurricane season, love bug season, holiday season, thunderstorm season, snowbird season, and summer tourist season, but a ‘golf season?’ Shoot, we have ‘golf season’ all year!”

They use the winter hiatus to take time off and recharge their batteries and get ready for next spring. They couldn’t imagine having to keep after it all year long. We discussed that fact and they asked me, “How do southern superintendents stay pumped up all year?”

I explained that in cooler months, our turf growth slows down and, while we are very busy with play, some turf management routines are a little more relaxed. But as I thought about that statement, I realized that more and more courses are overseeding wall to wall or using more fine-bladed

grasses on their greens like bentgrass and poa trivialis which call for more care and concern. So here we are in the winter up and down the state, managing various degrees of dormant, semi-dormant, or actively growing bermudagrass and all sorts of combinations of overseeded golf courses. We just can’t wait for spring when we groom out the overseeding and watch as the bermudagrass goes into high gear.

So how do we cope? How do we stay pumped up all year? We take a day off once a month to attend a local superintendent chapter meeting, or we leave early once and awhile to play a round of golf with our peers or, if we have the support of our clubs, we may be able to take a week off in February to attend the GCSAA Turf Conference and Trade Show. So, over the span of the year, we might take off a total of a month scattered throughout the year. This doesn’t count vacation time, which often is taken only one week at a time.

Unlike our northern colleagues, who drain their irrigation lines and equipment radiators and lock up shop for two or three months, we must take our breaks in little chunks. In fact you can always tell the Sunbelt Superintendents at the GCSAA Conference: they’re the ones on the phones during seminar breaks, calling back to their assistants to see how things are going.

Quite frankly, when superintendents take these golf-related breaks, they’re just out there getting more training and information that will help them do a better job. We never really get to forget about the job for a long time.

Think about that the next time your superintendent asks for some time and travel money to take a little break during Florida’s “golf season.”

Green Side Up



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