

At least two speakers and a panel at the recent GCSA convention pointed out the damage that can be done if golfers play through the winter at Northern courses, or if they insist on having their courses opened too early in the spring. A small amount of winter play may be tolerated, it was conceded. But it was generally agreed that with the onset of spring or good weather, turf is in its most vulnerable condition, and rushing the season may have injurious effects.

C. Richard Skogley, associate professor of agronomy at the University of Rhode Island, summarized opinion as to what happens when turf is subjected to medium or even light traffic too early in the spring when he said: "When alternate freezing and thawing are going on necessary soil granulation is taking place . . . If it is disrupted, serious compaction problems, that may persist through the season, can be induced . . . Turf is particularly vulnerable when it is coming out of the dormant stage . . . Grass blades are more easily damaged

at this time than any other . . . Turf in the early spring is struggling for a foothold and, too, it is recovering from winter damage and needs a warming period in which to recuperate."

Supts., of course, have been aware of these things for many, many years. But too few of their members realize what takes place at the time when the grass starts to come back. Some are indifferent, of course, but the majority will recognize the wisdom of closing the course or keeping it closed when it is explained to them why turf can be damaged during the trying days of early spring. Anthony J. Stranzel, supt. at Indian Valley CC, Telford, Pa., recently suggested to Fred Grau that if Golfdom were to carry a notice such as appears below, it could be posted on club bulletin boards and members could be informed as to why it is necessary to keep the course temporarily closed.

Copies of this notice, written by Grau, can be obtained by writing to Golfdom.

Course Closed Temporarily

In the interests of all the members, and in an attempt to preserve the high quality of our greens, the course is closed to play until conditions warrant resumption of traffic.

Foot and wheel traffic on frozen grass causes the grass to turn brown and die. Ice crystals within the grass blades are distorted and rupture living cells, causing death.

When the frost is thawed by the warm sun the surface of the greens remain overly-wet for a short time. In this condition foot traffic can cause severe damage by breaking roots, creating compaction, and footprinting so badly that pleasurable putting is not possible.

Every effort is made to keep the course continuously playable, but when Nature fails to cooperate and brings frost or floods, we have no choice but to limit play. The understanding and consideration of the members are greatly appreciated.

The Golf Course Superintendent