

# A Fresh Start

By David Brandenburg, Golf Course Superintendent, Rolling Meadows Golf Course



I feel superintendents in Wisconsin are lucky to have four seasons of weather. The winter season gives us an opportunity to prepare for the next year and not worry so much about the day-to-day grind of course maintenance and player concerns. Best of all the spring season gives us a fresh start with staff, equipment and ideas.

The off-season allows staff to go over equipment so it is painted and polished. Reels and cutting blades are sharp and set perfectly for that first cut. Many of us see new units added to our equipment fleet to help us maintain the property up to expectations. I know our entire staff is excited with the fresh start of a new or redone piece of equipment.

New employees are another highlight of spring. I think back to my first day at Sunset Hills in Beaver Dam and how excited and nervous I was to join the course staff. If you look and listen, you can see that feeling of excitement in most new hires. We have quite a few students on our staff and every year a few move on to their intended careers. For returning seasonal or full time employees, a fresh start means forgetting those little mistakes of last year and a commitment to be better than ever. It also means a renewal of friendships within the staff from the year before.

As managers, we need a fresh start along with our staff and equipment. In winter, I write down goals for improving the operation as they come to mind. It could be new improvements or something we may not be doing to the best of our ability. Spring is a great time to implement new ideas because old habits are easier to break after taking a few months off. As the season approaches, I take the goals and list what we need to do to accomplish them.

For me personally I need to communicate better by expressing my expectations. I explain things to the point I understand them, but I need to go to the next level and explain them until the entire staff understands the idea. I also have a goal of keeping my office organized to reduce time looking for things or handling papers twice.

For our staff, we need to improve our bunker maintenance to protect the borders we work so hard at edging. We also need to develop a system for our rough and trim mowers to cover the entire course effectively. Most of the rough is mowed as it should be, by the proper machine. However, three people mow some of the areas, and then we have those little areas that everyone assumes someone else took care of that are not mowed at all. By coordinating our efforts, we can easily cover each area once without double covering or skipping. We are also starting a first cut of rough around greens and fairways this season to provide a better product.

What are your goals for this year? Take the time this spring while you have a fresh start to reset your goals and priorities. If you do not do it now, spring will slip by and it will be too late. Good luck and God bless in your efforts. ♣



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