

Patience

By Chad Harrington, Golf Course Superintendent, Autumn Ridge Golf Course

I have always told people and felt that one of the greatest benefits to our profession is the fact that every day, every season, and every year is different and will bring new challenges. Not that I have a problem with a routine, as I have found out a routine can be very nice, but I personally enjoy the diversity each new day brings.....at least until this spring.

The early start that many of the Wisconsin Golf Courses enjoyed in 2012 has seemed to bring a false and extremely unrealistic expectation to golfers in our region. I am not sure we collectively have enough fingers to count the times I have heard about how great the weather was last year or how many rounds were played at this time in 2012. I am still looking for the polite and courteous method to explain that although we take great pride in the property we represent, we can do very little about the weather conditions that occur at the facility. One would think that the average golfer would understand that, but we do seem to get the blame.

I know I have mentioned that my favorite part of our industry is the diversity that comes with it, but I will say that 2013 has started a bit mean to many of us. The "Spring" issues at our facility actually started way back in January with the heavy rains that melted much of our snow base and filled our wetlands, lakes, and streams. I was asked multiple times to gaze into the crystal ball and predict what the outcome would be for our turf as we get started for the season. Every course responds differently to weather events, but our facility usually drains fairly well, so I was not overly concerned about the water

we had just received seeing that most of it had drained into our wetlands and lakes. My crystal ball must have had a crack! Little did I know that we would get another three plus feet of snow and completely overwhelm our drainage areas.

So much for being prepared for the hundred-year flood. I did find it almost humorous when my son told me that the fishing was great on the thirteenth fairway. One cleaned out drain tile and a week without rain and we were good to go. See how our jobs keep us learning new and exciting things to keep us interested and on our toes. I wish this is all I was able to learn this year, but unfortunately it was not.

Warm weather has finally made a bit of an appearance to our state and many of us had to fire up the irrigation and we are no different. Flooded in one spot, dry in another. This year became even more exciting than most for what I would consider a "regular" task. I am sure like many of you, we had the occasional broken head or cracked pipe that somehow had a bit of water that didn't get blown out, but unfortunately that was not it. I again got to learn something new for 2013. I found out that when you have a fire protection system in your facility that is hooked to your irrigation system and pump station, and that fire protection system has a leak, you can pump a lot of water into a building at one time.

This type of issue has very little to do with turf maintenance, but many of are responsible for clubhouse maintenance as well, and this event has definitely allowed me to learn a couple of new skills. One of them

is patience. No one ever likes to pay an insurance premium, but make no mistake, it is important. Thankfully a couple of weeks into this process things are starting to get back to normal and shortly I will be able to move back into my office that will have a bit of a facelift. I have been amazed what the loss of something as simple as an office, and of course everything that was in it, can affect my daily routine. Maybe I need to rethink my opinion about a regular routine, this year that doesn't sound bad at all.

Some of you have probably heard, but for those of you who have not, we are losing one of our valued board members. I would like to congratulate Colin Seaberg on accepting the Superintendent position at Barton Hills CC in Ann Arbor, Michigan and wish him the very best. I have appreciated the dedication, hard work, and enthusiasm Colin has displayed as a member of the WGCSA and our Association's Board of Directors. Thank you for all of your efforts Colin.

For the members who have attended our first two golf-meeting events this season, you may have noticed something new at our registration table. We have been working with Ping Apparel to be able to provide WGCSA logo merchandise to our association at a great value. Many of the other allied golf associations have offered branded apparel for many years and we felt it would be prudent to be able to make the same offer.

If you have not been able to attend one of our first events or missed the order form at registration, there will be one included in this copy of *The Grass Roots* and look for an electronic link on our web site shortly. All of the clothing orders will be shipped directly to you from Ping and are a great way for us to show the pride we share of our profession.

I wish all of you the best of luck in the 2013 season and thank you for being a part of this exciting and ever changing profession and association. 

