



SEASON TRANSITION CHANGES

Minnesota vs. Indiana

By Chris Hague, Hazeltine National Golf Club

Within the subject matter of this article I will touch upon two very important golf course management areas I have encountered and observed since beginning at Hazeltine National Golf Club; that being seasonal and turf program differences.

I come from an area where the golfing season usually started the third week of March and ended in early to mid-December. Here sometimes snow cover takes place by mid-November and golf season start-up is pushed into mid-April. I can remember beginning weekend mowing routines by mid-April many seasons because soil temperatures had warmed sufficiently to influence turfgrass growth.

Since being in the "NORTH" country I have found that not many courses are on crabgrass and other monocot pre-emergence programs. In my previous area it was not uncommon to put down four pounds active Balan or twenty-five pounds active Bensulide per acre per season for these purposes. Soil temperatures many springs were capable of crabgrass emergence by April 15 if conditions were correct. A good percentage of courses in the central Indiana area are spending from \$8,000 to \$15,000 to keep clean fairways, tees, greens and roughs.

Summer stress periods are longer than this area by some thirty days or so. With this comes more pressure for proneness to brownpatch, melting-out, anthracnose and pythium. It was common to have daytime temperatures average 85° to 95°F from the first week of June through mid-September with nights staying above 65°F. So as you can see 600 miles south makes a considerable difference in programming and timing a sound turf program.

As in all areas though, tradeoffs (good and bad) are always a strong contributor to the success of a Golf Course Superintendent in any region. In Indiana if a course was weakened seriously in the summer months there was extra seed germination and growing time in September, October, one-half of November and one-half of April to help put the course back into top condition. Here in Minnesota from my initial fall observation successful seed germination without frost damage is unlikely after September 1. For me this means I must learn to complete many projects one month earlier than my past experience has dictated. Minnesota superintendents have less time to make themselves look good before being thrown into the winter season.

Of course snow molds and winter kill desiccation is much more prevalent in this new area. Much more time, expense and planning takes place in this area just as pythium and anthracnose were looked upon in my prior southern area. Snow mold controls are essentially the same except that I believe Minnesota Superintendents treat more acres on the average per course and this is accomplished about one and one-half months earlier than in Indiana.

The challenge of a new golf course, members and region is demanding and interesting. But as always, for this superintendent that last ride around the course in the evening to view the accomplishments and beauty makes it all worthwhile.