

What's Happening Around the State???

By **ROB PANUSKA**
Waseca Lakeside Club

The first week of March I took a morning and called several superintendents around the state to "get a feel" for what was happening on their course as it relates to the melting (if that applies) and turf condition. Thanks to all who were willing to share their observations. By the time you read this, most of us will have a good handle on our turf condition coming out of winter. The purpose of this article is to give you some others' opinions and observations early. Please take the time to record what has happened and what you have done at your course this spring as it relates to ice, disease, rodent damage, etc.

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Leif Erickson of Scotts Co. has seen the most severe ice buildup in the western area of the state where the rain in November froze and snow cover insulated any possible melting. Many superintendents were removing the snow in early March when the weather was predicted to be sunny and warm. Some had removed snow early and broke up the ice. He said that those who did not remove the ice after breaking it up were finding that it just melted and refroze again. On the eastern side the problem was more from unfrozen turf and the resulting snow mold that was developing now.

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Bill Whitworth at Northfield had around two inches of clear ice on some greens. He went out in February and removed the snow and broke up the ice on a couple of problem greens. On areas that he had problems with in the past, he split and removed snow and ice on one half and left the other as an experiment. He also reported that shortly after removal in February he had a 6-inch snowfall before any severe cold weather. "At his point the areas look ok" he told me. He also has seen major damage to *Arborvitae* by deer.

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At Owatonna, Mankato and here at Waseca, Steve (VanNatta), Fred (Taylor) and I all agreed that our situations are not critical at this point. Ice, while it may be up to two inches thick, is cloudy and honeycombed and the turf looks fine underneath. I have noticed significant damage to some landscape areas from rabbits and mice. Also with the wind creating large drifts around evergreens, I am seeing damage to branches from settling snow as it melts.

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Kevin Clunis from St. Croix National in Somerset,



The 10th hole at Wayzata Country Club on St. Patrick's Day.

Wis. reported that he still has 18 inches of snow cover and around 1/4 to 1/2 inch of ice. His biggest concern was a rapid melt and the problems of erosion with a new course. His plan was to remove snow as needed to create drainage areas on greens but he added that with a new course he did not know where all those areas might be. He also said that he visited with Dr. Don Taylor at UW-River Falls and Don expects to see a lot of crown hydration, especially *Poa*. Kevin's reaction was "well, at least at this point, my greens are all bent."

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Steve Hamelau at Alexandria Golf Club had just returned from a bull session with 22 other supers in the area. "We have 36 inches of snow on the ground and around three inches of ice under it" he said. Some had gone out and removed the snow and chipped at the ice early and, after comparing plug samples, they agreed that not much difference was seen in turf condition which is o.k. at this point. Their biggest concern is "how are we going to get to dry greens." Some said that the frost had actually gone out from the bottom up and were concerned about damage trying to remove the snow, but felt that they needed to get the snow off ASAP. Others were going to go out and blow off what they could. Most felt that removal of the snow was essential and that the ice would go fast with good sunshine. Steve said he was going to wait for the "pack" to melt down to 6 to 18 inches, then go out and shovel it off. He said "we went into winter o.k., the big question is, can we get out now?"