

# ON THE ROAD WITH THE USGA

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We're entering the time of year when golfers desires and expectations often clash with agronomic limitations. Specifically, the desire of golfers to begin playing clashing with frost in the root zone. While temperatures are beginning to warm, the cold nights have allowed root zone frost to linger. Allowing player traffic when the root zone is a combination of frozen soil overlaid by a softer thawed zone can cause turf damage. In fact, the damage can linger well into the season depending upon weather conditions. Thus, the operative is "caution". If a hole cannot be cut or relocated on a putting surface, or if there is frost in the root zone then hold off allowing player traffic. It doesn't make any sense to allow early play to compromise turf quality.

Another issue that has been receiving a lot of attention over the last few weeks is snow mold disease protection. Unfortunately, late fall applications were not made at many courses across the region due to weather limitations. So is there value in making an application in late winter/early

spring? Past history is an important factor, with a more proactive approach taken on those sites that have experienced past damage. Putting surfaces are the most important and can be compromised by lingering disease scars should cool weather slow recovery from any damage that happens to occur. Thus, while each situation needs to be evaluated on its own merits, snow mold disease prevention is something that should at least be considered as we move from winter into early spring.

Don't allow the desire for warm temperatures to spawn early spring fertilization. Now is the time of year to rely on fall and early winter feeding to carry the load, and avoid explosion growth that can result from early spring feeding. Patience and caution is the best approach over the next several weeks. The season will arrive soon enough. Should you have any other concerns or want to discuss the above in more detail give us a call (859/356-3272).

Source: Bob Brame bobbrame@usga.org or 859-356-3272

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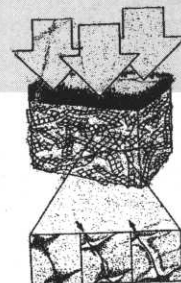
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