



# Within the Leather

by David Kazmierczak, CGCS

**A calendar year can be divided up into many different**

**seasons. There are the four seasons, of course: winter, spring, summer and fall, that divide the calendar into equal quarters and generally usher in a change in weather patterns depending on your location.**

**Then there are weather related seasons. In some places, rain is so prevalent or sparse that certain times of the year are referred to as “the rainy” season or “the dry” season. Man-made seasons are also a way of providing benchmarks throughout the calendar. Christmas, Hannukka, et al are referred to as the Holiday Season. There’s the Easter season. If you are into sports, there are all kinds of seasons for you, the most important of which is football season. To me, there are really only two seasons- football season, and not football season. All the other sports seasons are distractions until and during football season.**

**The golf season is, of course, of paramount interest to almost all who are reading this column.**

**It is a catch-all season that sums up our livelihood. Within the golf season is the busy season, which parallels the growing season. These two seasons of heavy play and heavy growth are the backbone of golf season. There’s the off-season, when the snow shuts down the course and a deep sigh of relief is drawn into the lungs, followed by the seminar season, which is getting started just after the holiday season. The seminar season lasts until the golf season starts, which is great unless the spring season decides the winter season has not had its due. That is precisely where we are at right now, and I have a new name for it. I am going to call it the pothole season.**

**I was reminded that the pothole season was fully underway when my vehicle almost disappeared from the road the other day on my drive to work. A giant pothole, formed from weeks of melting and re-freezing precipitation, engulfed my mini-van and spit it out the other side with tires wobbling and wipers blazing. For a moment, I thought the Chinese language classes I was taking were really going to pay off. Where did this demon hole come from? It was not there the other day. Pothole season is officially in full bloom.**

And what a pothole season it has turned out to be. It is payback, really, for the potholes of the state. Last season saw the sparsest crop of potholes Minnesota has ever seen. We skipped right past pothole season and went from seminar season, heck, two-thirds into seminar season right into golf season. Pothole season was eliminated before it even began.

Pothole season makes people grumpy. The winter is supposed to be coming to an end but it is not. The snow and cold keep coming like an unwanted fungus. The blade on our plow is just about worn down to the nub. Salt supplies are running very low. Even the cat and dog are going nuts from being trapped in the house for so long.

I suppose superintendents should embrace pothole season in a strange way. If they are behind in their winter work, it is a chance to catch up and be super ready for the growing season. No need for those extra hires in the early spring, which makes the budget look better. Plenty of extra time to plan, make sure all the T's are crossed and all the I's dotted. But if pothole season lasts too long, busy season turns into the entire golf season, and that opens up a whole new can of worms.

So why do I bring all this up?

Surely pothole season is not news to anybody living in Minnesota or Western Wisconsin. It is a normal progression in normal weather years. I guess the point is that this is natural. That this is normal for this time of year around these parts and last year was the abnormal year. I remember hearing last year that this was going to be the new normal. That weather patterns have shifted so that Minnesota was going to become Omaha. Real Minnesota winter was a thing of the past. Right. Step outside and tell me another one.

Now don't get me wrong, I do think climate change is real, and some steps need to be taken so we do not use up this planet for future generations. But if I hear one more thing about how Minnesota is the new Omaha I am going to get unreasonable. Clearly, that is just not the case. If we have a cool summer I bet you will even hear a story about global cooling.

So make the most out of pothole season as best you can, and hopefully avoid the gaping chasms anxious to do your vehicle malice. May all your grass emerge from the white abyss healthy, happy, and ready to grow. Enjoy the season, whatever it may be.