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Golf Course Superintendent
Lake Monticello Golf Course
51 Bunker Blvd.
Palmyra, Virginia 22963

October 27, 2008

This letter will serve as a supplement to the USGA Turf Advisory report dated October 9, 2008 and filed to your club.

In my report I focused on moving forward with foundational agronomic plans to improve turf health. Improving turf health will provide every opportunity to maintain the greens in the desired consistent manner throughout the season. To accomplish this, programs need to be implemented to address limiting factors. Proactive measures need to be put forth to address the soils of the greens, the shade cast by trees, and the poor surface drainage characteristics of the putting surfaces.

Without question, the soils in which the greens are being grown are restrictive and the number one limiting factor. There are compaction layers that need to be fractured, modification that needs to be performed (more sand) and organic debris that needs to be removed. These limiting factors create stresses that when combined with other uncontrollable variables make it almost impossible to maintain turf health. In particular, *Poa annua* loss will be unavoidable. The only way to break the cycle of *Poa annua* rejuvenation and loss is to become much more aggressive with cultural practices that will promote bentgrass in the greens.

Implementing practices is one thing but having the personnel available to complete the tasks is the important aspect of golf course turf care. Restrictions placed on the labor budget also restrict what is realistic to accomplish on a daily basis to prepare the turf for harsh weather. When labor is limited, then the focus of care becomes limited as well! The focus narrows dramatically resulting in the maintenance staff reacting to problems rather than having the any chance of proactively controlling potential serious and catastrophic issues.

The “Achilles heal” of the greens is moisture. You are at the mercy of the weather. If the soils become saturated followed by high heat and humidity, the turf will suffer. Begin by clearly defining a course care document. If the Committee is fine with current conditions, then don’t chance a thing. However, it is unrealistic to expect that budget cuts can be absorbed without affecting the manner in which programs are enacted. The set-up of the course dictates what needs to be done to present the turf in the desired manner.

Sincerely,

Keith Happ
Senior Agronomist