

INFO FROM THE GREENKEEPERS

Newsletter 16th December 2022

Dear members,

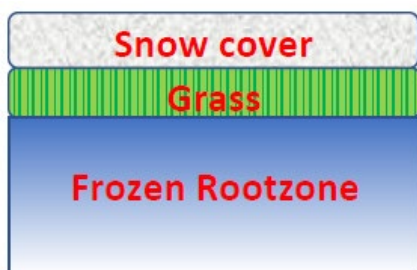
As Christmas is approaching, I thought I would take the opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas, with the best wishes for the year ahead.

With the course presently closed due to snow and hard frost in the ground, I also thought it prudent to give an update on how I see the weather progressing over the next week. Today I have revised all of my weather apps, 12 in total, to try and best gauge the forecasts effect on the course conditions.

Fre. 16. dec.		-3°/-9°
Lør. 17. dec.		-1°/-9°
Søn. 18. dec.		-1°/-2°
Man. 19. dec.		5°/-1° 6 mm
Tir. 20. dec.		9°/5° 9 mm
Ons. 21. dec.		8°/6° 4 mm
Tor. 22. dec.		5°/3° <1 mm
Fre. 23. dec.		2°/0° <1 mm
Lør. 24. dec.		2°/0° 6 mm

Firstly, predicting weather more than 5 to 7 days ahead is often fruitless. The outlook appears to show us being in frost conditions through this coming weekend with lows of -10, then plus temperatures arrive early in the week, which will enable the snow to start to thaw quite rapidly, however rain is also forecast. Please take a moment to read the information below from Mark Hunt at Prodata Weather Systems which further explains the consequence of this scenario.

Dealing with a rapid thaw...



Dealing with a rapid thaw is perhaps one of the trickiest management situations in sports turf.

At some point during a thaw after a prolonged period of hard frost and / or snow cover, there will be a perception that the snow / ice / frost (delete where applicable) has 'gone' and the surfaces are 'acceptable' to play on.

The worst-case scenario is one where the rapid thaw is accompanied by rainfall. This often happens when a dominant, cold temperature, high pressure system is replaced by a mild, south westerly-based, low pressure. The latter is usually associated with rain.

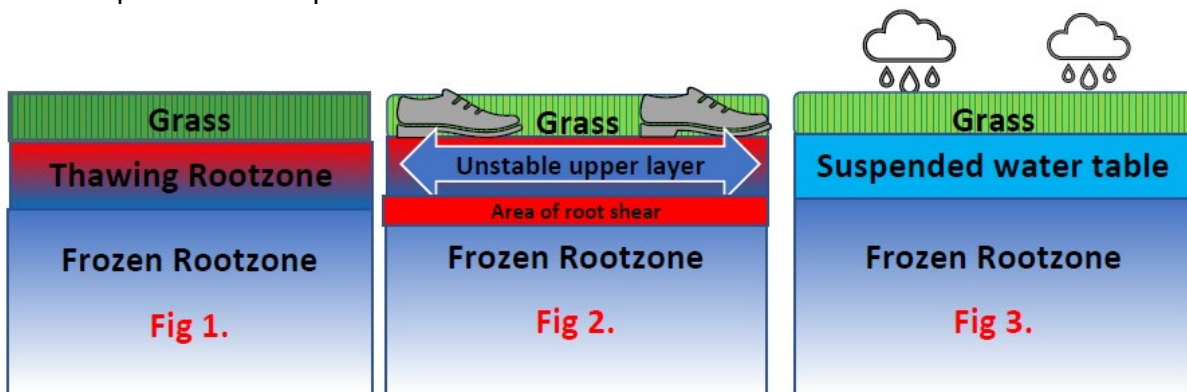
Regardless of whether you have snow cover lying over frozen ground, the dynamic is the same.

Fig 1. - The rain will fall onto the frozen grass and rootzone and dependent on the type of rootzone (sand, loam, clay, mixture thereof), it will soon transition into a state where the surface layer of the rootzone begins to thaw over the top of a deeper, frozen layer.

Fig2. - The upper layer will become mobile as it thaws and at this stage it is at its most susceptible to damage from foot traffic. Play at this stage will have a deleterious effect. Under concentrated wear, the unstable, upper zone will shear the grass at the root and turn the surface layer to a mix of grass and soil. Affected areas will be damaged and not recover until the spring. It is also worth mentioning that when the upper layer is fluid, it is very easy to slip and fall onto frozen ground causing harm. It is a clear health & safety hazard and especially on sloped surfaces.

Fig 3. - The other issue is that the rainfall will not be able to drain through the profile because it is frozen and so will accumulate on the surface causing flooding. The heavier the rain, the more significant the flooding.

Once the thaw has reached a depth where the surface is stable under traffic, then damage will be limited. This will often be indicated by water being able to drain through the profile. It must also be remembered that areas of shade may take longer complete this process as the frost will have penetrated deeper.



I hope this information helps to explain another of the challenges we face whilst trying as best we can to accommodate play on regulation greens year round, whilst still doing everything we can to ensure we do not inflict unnecessary damage to the grass plant and course in general.

I will continue to communicate updates via the green splash on our homepage during the days and weeks ahead. Please note as it stands today the trolley ban is still not in place.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Reamonn O'Neill
Golf Course Superintendent