

Winter Turf Injury Update for Iowa Golf Courses – 27 Mar 2008

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Most of the snow has disappeared in Iowa but even as I write this we are getting a wet snow north of Route 30. Winter just won't seem to quite. I have been visiting courses mostly in central over the last week and wanted to give you a last update on what we are seeing. Thanks to those who sent me information and pictures this winter as we tried to predict what type of injury to expect. Here are some observations and comments from this record setting winter.

- In some areas of Iowa we experienced 100+ days of continuous ice and snow cover.
- Annual bluegrass and perennial ryegrass were injured more than creeping bentgrass and Kentucky bluegrass. I have not had a report yet about tall fescue.
- If you are experiencing black grass on putting greens in poorly drained or drainage swale areas then you should develop a plan for reseeding those areas. An anaerobic sewage smell was notice when samples were removed from the green. Get on your knees and stick you nose in the sample hole to get a real whiff of the future. A sewage smell is bad. Compare that odor with a more elevated area of the green that doesn't have the black or damaged grass to smell the sweet smell of success. The samples we collected and put in the green house for recovery during the week of 24 March 2008 produced only 0 to 40% living turf.
- Scratch the surface of the green to see if any green material can be found, but take note that there can be green leaves attached to dead crowns. In this situation the green may first appear to green up and then quickly die.
- Take note of the sections of a green that was injured this year (mostly areas where water collected). If we have a similar winter next year then we need to develop a winter sampling program to determine if these areas are starting to die.

Please contact Dave Minner 515-231-1741 dminner@iastate.edu or Jeff Wendel 515-232-8222 jeff@iowaturfgrass.org to keep us informed as you evaluate your greens this spring.