

Cold Winds, Frosty Mornings & Golf Course Etiquette

By: Wayne Slaton, Golf Course Superintendent

It's that time of year again—when the north wind bites a little harder, and the mornings start with a shimmer of frost. While Central Texas weather can serve up all four seasons in a single day, we know winter is creeping in when the Bermuda grass goes dormant and the fairways start to yellow.

Frost Delays: Why They Happen

We average **30–35 frost delays per year**. Frost delays protect our greens and playing surfaces from damage. When frost or frozen ground is present, walking or driving on it can crush the grass cells, leading to long-term turf damage.

We often hear:

- “It’s 35°, we can play now, right?” → **Nope**. We need time for the frost to melt and for the top inch of the greens to thaw.
- “Can we go off the back 9?” → **Still no**. The back 9 is lower and stays frozen longer.
- “I have to be at work by 1pm!” → **Good news—you’ll be early**. Golf will not start until it’s safe to be on the turf.

Please remember: **the golf shop team and maintenance crew don’t control the weather**. A little kindness goes a long way. Mother Nature is undefeated—we just try to keep up.

Cart Traffic & Course Care

Dormant Bermuda is especially vulnerable to cart traffic. You might notice ropes and stakes on holes **#1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, and 18**—these are there to protect newly overseeded areas and reduce wear.

If everyone practiced good cart etiquette, we could remove many of these barriers. Maybe someday we’ll have smart carts that enforce it for us! Until then, please help us by following the signs and staying on paths when possible.

Plan Ahead

With clear skies, temps can drop **6° in the last hour before sunrise**, and our course—being in a lower area of Leander—is often **10° cooler than in town**. It's always a surprise to first-timers, but regulars know: **call ahead** if you've got an early tee time. Also pay attention to your email and text notifications for updates as well.

Learn More About Frost Delays

- USGA Frost Delay Video

https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/videos/2018/03/22/usga_frost_updatedl3rd-5756266521001.html

- “But There’s No Frost at My House” Article

<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/course-care/green-section-record/61/issue-21/but-there-s-no-frost-at-my-house.html>

See You on the Course!

Thank you for your patience and understanding this winter.

Enjoy the extra roll on those drives (as long as they don't end up in a penalty area), and we look forward to seeing you out on the course soon!