

When The Unexpected Happens

By: Wayne Slaton, Golf Course Superintendent

We all expect consistency when planning to enjoy a good round of golf, with a chance to spend 4-5 hours of outdoor time with just yourself, or maybe a few of your friends, or a chance to make some new friends. Making new friends is a great unexpected happening. We all have different reasons why we love to play this great game. Here at our golf course, we have a one-of-a-kind golf course that is not like anything else around the area. Uniqueness with topography slopes and shot making that will keep the best players on their toes. Those that learn to play here, have good golf shot making skill that can travel to other golf courses. Most of the time they will play well because they were challenged here to hit better golf shots. That unexpected moment when you go play somewhere else and you realize you didn't miss a fairway, or if you missed a green and you were able to get up and down to save a few more pars than expected.

The unexpected can happen in a positive or negative way. An unexpected positive would be underestimating what golf course conditions could be like here and hopefully customers were impressed with the playing conditions, along with a friendly greeting from some of the team on the golf course, from helping them find a ball, to even cheering for them and saying great shot. That unexpected positive moment can be powerful in creating a positive place to enjoy playing golf. Yes, the GCM (golf course maintenance) team will do the best we can to still get the mowing and other tasks done on the golf course, yet our team wants to do the best we can for all. From our regulars to our first-time customers, we want you to be able to enjoy all the hard work we have put into our golf course.

A negative unexpected happening could be a customer that had an early tee time, and mowers or other golf maintenance tasks are still finishing up, and they play a few holes with our GCM team working in front of them and maybe behind them a few holes. It could have helped those unexpected happenings most of the time because they didn't get a chance to read a communication email about our events, or maintenance procedures such as heavy top dressings, or our range maintenance days. On range maintenance days we always know we are on the clock. We always have a goal of opening on time, yet we can open sometimes ahead of the scheduled 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday mornings.

We always seek to keep our greens smooth and semi fast, but within reason. Everyone wants fast green speeds, yet at some times of the year, environmental factors can limit our 36-year-old greens to be able to produce fast green speeds without great sacrifice to the overall health of the greens for the season. We on the GCM team do understand that the unexpected can happen to our greens. Things golfers can control such as human damage from frustrated customers taking divots on the greens with angry swings that take big turf chunks out of the greens, kids on e-bikes spinning out on greens, to wild weather events such as hail, to 100 degree days that cook our cool season turf out too fast.

So being able to adapt and adjust to the unexpected negatives is all we can do. I enjoy those unexpected positives, such as a good rain at the right time after our cultural practices have been done on our golf course like a core aeration. Maybe something like a good bounce off the tree that goes back into the fairway or a ball mark you didn't see on the green in your line that it bumps off into the cup. Look forward to seeing you on our golf course and hope that those unexpected happens be positive.