

Frost Delays in The Villages

Frost occurs when the dew point is below 32 degrees and air temperature is getting close to the same. This can happen, some mornings, even when the air temperature is around 38 degrees. One thing to remember is that the coldest time in the mornings is at sunrise. Thus, on really cold mornings, delays are easier to predict. But when the air temperature is in the 38-40 degree range, frost may not form until sunrise. With sunrise at 7:22 AM on January 1st, frost could form right when your scheduled tee time is. This is why it is difficult to predict frost delays, so we wait until just before 7:00 AM to make the call.

Here in The Villages, there are four different ways to find out if there is a frost at the golf course you're scheduled to play.

1. Call the golf course after 7:00 AM.
2. Listen to WVLG after 7:00 AM.
3. Check the ticker on www.golfthevillages.com after 7:15 AM.
4. Check the ticker on VNN after 7:15 AM.

Understanding Frost Delays

Presented by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

As winter starts it signals a change in golf course management activities that can affect one's game and the conditions found on the course.

In many regions of the country, golfers occasionally face frost delays, thus losing starting tee times. When frost is present golf course superintendents delay play until the frost has melted. This is done to prevent damage that affects the quality of the playing surface and could potentially be very expensive to repair.

Frost is basically frozen dew that has crystallized on the grass, making it hard and brittle. A grass blade is actually 90 percent water, therefore it also freezes. Because of the short mowing height (sometimes as low as 1/8 inch) and fragile nature of the turf, putting greens are most affected by frost. Walking on frost-covered greens causes the plant to break and cell walls to rupture, thereby losing its ability to function normally. When the membrane is broken, much like an egg, it cannot be put back together.

Golfers who ignore frost delays will not see immediate damage. The proof generally comes 48-72 hours later as the plant leaves turn brown and die. The result is a thinning of the putting surface and a weakening of the plant. The greens in turn become more susceptible to disease and weeds. While it may not appear to be much of an issue if a foursome begins play early on frost covered greens, consider the number of footprints that may occur on any given hole by one person is approximately 60.

As golf enthusiasts Superintendents do not like to delay play, but they are more concerned about turf damage and the quality of conditions for the golfer. Frost

also creates a hardship on a golf facility's staff as all course preparations are put to a halt until thawing occurs. Golf carts can cause considerable damage, therefore personnel cannot maneuver around the course to mow, change cup positions, collect range balls, etc.

Key points:

- * Frost is basically frozen dew that has crystallized on the grass, making it hard and brittle. A grass blade is actually 90 percent water, therefore it also freezes.
- * Walking on frost-covered greens causes the plant to break and cell walls to rupture, thereby losing its ability to function normally.
- * When damaged, the putting surface weakens and becomes more susceptible to disease and weeds.
- * One foursome can leave several hundred footprints on each green, causing extensive damage.
- * A short delay while the frost melts can preserve the quality of the greens and prevent needless repairs.