

## A Change of Pace

Andrew Getty, The Prairie Club

The winter of 2021/2022 and the winter of 2022/2023 could not have been more different out here on Nebraska's prairie. A wet winter with temperatures near seasonal averages was a welcome sight for the turf and managers alike.



In 2021, the irrigation system was fully charged and in use until December 5th, with our blowout taking place the following week. Immediately following blowout, the golf course received a 6" blanket of snow. It would be the only measurable snow of the winter. Around Christmas, we covered our greens with the usual hydromulch for protection and hoped for the best. Prairie Club full time staff consisting of Director Brandon Arens, Superintendent DJ Shallenberger, Assistant AJ Wrage, and myself worked on continuously watering some aspect of the property anytime the temperatures were above 40° Fahrenheit. We fought the wind that was continuously blowing sand out of bunkers and on to greens and fairways. We did anything we could to help the turf survive until we turned the irrigation system back on and washed the greens covers off in mid March of 2022.



Covering the greens and winter watering in winter 2021/2022



This winter has been a change of pace. As of March 22nd, Valentine has been blessed with over 60" of snowfall. Winter came early, with low temperatures forcing us to blowout starting on November 6th. We spent the Sunday and Monday after Thanksgiving doing some light winter watering on greens, but the golf course has had snow coverage off and on since November 29th. For the first time in Prairie Club history, the hydromulch covers were not applied to the greens because of consistent snow. We've had internal discussions about how much we should worry about snow mold and ice damage. The wind had been tranquil by our standards, and the constant presence of moisture has tamed the ever-shifting bunker sands. To summarize, this winter has been *different*.

This winter has been a season to recharge our bodies and minds. Was it needed? Who knows? As with everyone in this industry, we would've gladly worked the long hours and braved the conditions all season long if Mother Nature had dealt us that hand. Instead, she gave us the flexibility to spend more time with family and friends, pursue our hobbies, and catch up on life away from the golf course. DJ and I were able to see many friends and colleagues at the Nebraska Turfgrass Conference in January. Brandon has been busy serving as an NSAA basketball official. And we've each had our own vacations.



Highway 97 south of Valentine, December 2022

Last year, spring just came and went. Amongst labor shortages and uncertainty, dry weather, desiccation, and a long winter, the months just blended together. This year, however, I'm excited for spring. I'm itching to get back out on the course again. I can't wait for the first mow, the steady beat of the ProCore, and for (fingers crossed) the sound of Spanish in our breakroom again.

Hopefully, spring of 2023 excites you too.

Additionally, I'm excited to be serving you all on the board of the Nebraska Turfgrass Association. As a board, we hope to bring you more content, education, and networking opportunities throughout the year. If you have any comments, suggestions, or feedback, don't hesitate to reach out to myself or any other board member. Our purpose is to promote and advance the turfgrass industry throughout the entire state of Nebraska. Whether you are a lawn care operator, sports turf manager, or golf course superintendent, we are here for you.

As the grass turns green, I wish you all the best in 2023.

Andrew Getty

