

## **FROST DELAYS – QUAIL CREEK GOLF COURSE POLICY TO PROTECT THE GOLF COURSE**

Golf courses that are open all year long sometimes run into a drop in the temperature overnight causing frost to form on the fairways and putting greens. At Quail Creek the staff will enforce a 'Frost Delay' which will push back all tee times and delay all shotgun starts to a later time, until the ground has warmed up enough to melt the frost. If frost on the course is ignored and regular play commences it will cause damage to the playing surface and makes the grass susceptible to disease and weeds.

Quail Creek Golf Course policy is to close the course at 32° and re-open at 39° as long as frost has not formed on the greens.

The staff can syringe the greens with our sprinkler system once above 39°. Shaded greens can take longer to warm up and can prevent early shotgun starts such as the Tuesday Nix Center Ladies Golf Association Leagues, Wednesday Senior League and Saturday Bull Pen.

If there is Frost and/or freezing temperatures during the winter months, it is best to call ahead to the golf shop for information concerning the course being open.

### **What is Frost?**

Frost damage can occur on any part of the golf course, but it poses the greatest risk to closely mown turf. Putting greens are particularly vulnerable because they experience the most concentrated traffic. A foursome typically takes 300 steps or more on each putting green; if there is frost present, all those steps could cause serious damage.

Frost itself doesn't damage grass in the way that it may damage other growing things, such as citrus fruit. However, golfers walking on frosty turf may harm the grass quite badly. Because the grass on putting greens is cut so low, around 1/8 inch, it is particularly vulnerable to damage when it's covered by frost.

Frost may occur overnight, but it often occurs at sunrise before the temperature begins to rise. Grass absorbs the sunlight and heat during the day and then loses the heat when the sun goes down. The results of this could cause the temperature of the ground and grass to be cooler than the air temperature. Frost begins to form at 4°C = 39°Fahrenheit or lower. It does not have to be below freezing for frost to occur. If the sky is clear there is a greater chance for frost. When there is cloud cover this tends to keep the air and ground warmer, almost acting as a blanket.

## Frost Delays: 5 Things Every Golfer Should Know!



*It's a frosty time of year across much of the country, so be prepared for delays.*

While much of the U.S. deals with winter's brunt, golfers in the Sun Belt and other mild parts of the country are still playing away. However, cool, crisp mornings bring the risk of frost delays. At some golf courses frost delays are rare, while at others they may be a regular occurrence. How often your morning round is affected by frost depends on the weather and a variety of other factors. Here are five things every golfer should know about frost delays:

### 1. Crunchy grass is vulnerable to damage.

Golf course turf is normally resilient to traffic, but when ice crystals form inside the plants, they become brittle and vulnerable to damage. Walking or driving over frost-covered grass may rupture plant cells, leading to dead turf. Or the plants may be weakened without immediately showing the effects. It can take grass more than a month to recover from this damage.

### 2. When it comes to frost delays, location is everything.

Many of us have looked out our windows at home and seen no signs of frost, only to find a frost delay when we reach the golf course. This is because frost can linger in colder microclimates long after other areas have thawed. North-facing slopes, low-lying areas and areas sheltered from the wind are especially likely to remain covered with frost. If you are worried about a potential frost delay it is best to call the golf shop to check on conditions at the course before leaving home.



***Frost can linger in low-lying and shaded areas long after temperatures have warmed elsewhere.***

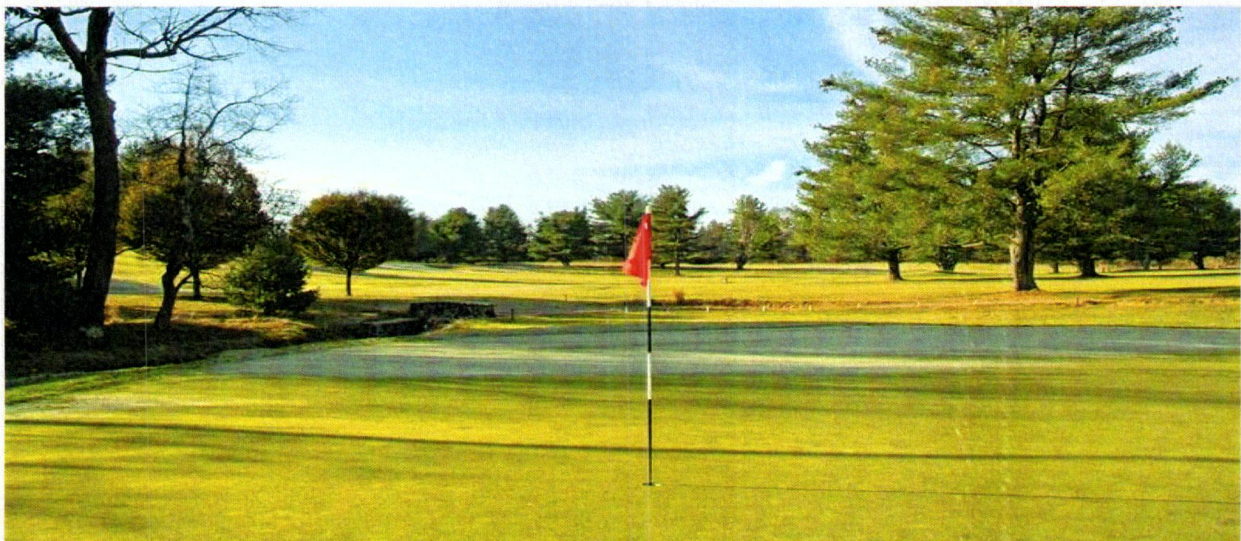
### **3. Closely mown turf is at high risk.**

**Frost damage can occur on any part of the golf course, but it poses the greatest risk to closely mown turf. Putting greens are particularly vulnerable because they experience the most concentrated traffic. A foursome typically takes 300 steps or more on each putting green; if there is frost present, all those steps could cause serious damage.**

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### **4. A little frost can cause big delays.**

**No signs of frost on the first tee? That doesn't mean you will get the "all clear" sign. If frost remains in areas that are unavoidable early in the round, the course must remain closed. It is also important to remember that once the frost is totally clear, the maintenance staff will need time to catch up on course preparations before play can begin.**



***When large trees shade primary playing surfaces, especially on early holes, the course must remain closed even if the frost has melted elsewhere.***

**5. More light goes a long way.**

**Shade extends frost delays by preventing sunlight from melting the frost. Pruning or removing trees that shade primary playing surfaces can improve the course's overall health and reduce the duration of frost delays. This is especially true on holes played early in the round. The shade from a few trees can keep an entire course closed.**

***To learn more about frost delays and other important course care topics, visit the [Course Care section of USGA.org](#).***

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