

With summer winding down, cooler weather, plenty of excitement abounds

We have made it through almost the entire summer with September now upon us. This is my favorite time of year with the cooler weather fast approaching.

The excitement was tremendous this past month to get my girls back in school, and for my son to begin his first year. Yes, you guessed it, I have a kindergartener! We have had to start over again on so many routines and schedules we thought we had nailed down. Big wrong! Life just got a whole lot more interesting in our house with the bathroom over-crowding, clothes flying and cereal bowls clattering.

I can relate this new addition of an extra student to our lifestyle directly to my work: Just when we have things running smoothly, we have to change gears.

With golf maintenance we always are changing gears here in The Villages. This September and throughout the fall we will gear all our routines toward meeting the larger needs of the returning players. Our overseed schedules will be starting in October; thanks to Mother Nature, with the added rains this year, it has been a great summer of growth!

This past summer we have been able to recover, revitalize and renovate many areas on our executive courses. With the reduction of rounds played during the summer, it gives us an opportunity to accomplish many tasks that would normally interfere and inconvenience golfers on other courses in the region. Since The Villages is extremely unique and fortunate with over 288 holes of executive golf and fewer residents in the summer, we can offer alternative golf courses to play. Closing courses for renovations, upgrades and other necessary maintenance has insured sustainable golf in our community for some time now. As summer comes to an end as



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well as our bi-weekly closures, we will begin a new process to insure consistency and sustainability for our fall and winter play.

Please keep in mind that during the fall and winter months we depend on not only our maintenance contractors, but our resident golfers also. We need this cooperation from our resident golfers to help maintain our courses during the cooler months when we do not have bi-weekly closures; there are several ways our residents can play a part in our maintenance process to keep the courses in optimal condition.

During the upcoming fall and winter months with overseeded greens, tees and fairways, the ground is much softer and prone to more divots and ball marks than in the summer. Bermuda grass will lay flat, turn brownish and become hard as dormancy occurs.

However, an overseeded area will become much more plush and vigorous. These conditions will bring an old nemesis out of the closet – the challenge we have with divots and ball marks. As many of you know, repairing divots and ball marks has been the topic of many conversations. Since we cannot close the courses in the fall and winter, they can be very unsightly.

This is an area that we call upon our fellow residents to be at the top of their game and assist us in making playing conditions the best possible.

Repairing divots, fixing ball marks, placing rakes in the bunkers and using the cart paths all create no impact to the players

but help tremendously to keep your courses in excellent condition until the summer months. When checking in to play, golfers can ask for current conditions, look for signs that help direct and lead by example in etiquette.

An extra set of eyes is very helpful when trying to manage all of our executive courses in the winter months. We all are stakeholders, so please share your observations.

If you are new to the golf experience and planning to make it one of your new lifestyle activities in your new hometown, please take the opportunity to become educated about the expectations of playing this lifelong game. We provide constant updated programs that include good golf school, golf instruction, printed information and other opportunities to prepare for this game.

Residents also have access to ongoing updates with the monthly turf talks that are posted on the Golf Administration web page at www.Golfthevillages.com and on the District web page at www.districtgov.org.

When it comes to golf and the 2 million rounds being played yearly on these courses, it requires everyone to do their part to keep them enjoyable for years to come.

As always, please feel free to introduce yourself if you see me on the courses. At every VCDD Executive starter building, my contact information is posted. Please feel free to contact me with any concerns or comments, as I welcome the correspondence with the residents regarding your executive golf courses. I can be reached by e-mail at eric.vangorder@districtgov.org or my office at 352-753-3396

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