USGA congratulates the GCBAA and its membership for their support of the game. Sticks for Kids, a junior golf outreach program for youth aged 5-18, raises over $50,000 for getting kids on the course.

All too often assumptions are made about what is best or most desirable for the playing quality. If the management of the intermediate rough becomes the norm, it will cost more, utilize more inputs, and be more difficult to maintain. Is this a good investment? It doesn't take much to make this decision. The immediate benefit is often seen, but the long-term impacts might not be as obvious in most cases.

BUT CAN THE COST BE ABSORBED?

Many golf facilities I visited were looking to take their facility to the next level, cut service visits. In most instances, these ideas are great and worth considering. When the intermediate rough becomes part of the design, these are some of the advantages the facility will experience:

1. Improved playability. 
2. Better appearance. 
3. Additional revenue potential.

When these ideas are considered, it is important to look at them from a realistic perspective. How will additional capital funds be necessary? How will the budget be absorbed once the budget is approved? It is not realistic to expect that added costs can be absorbed once unexpected requests have been made. This is why the financial impact of making the course more playable, or even maintaining the primary rough at a height of 4 inches, must be seriously considered. Is the course running well enough to make an investment of this nature? All too often the assumptions are made without a clear picture of the potential costs.

INTERMEDIATE ROUGH: A WASTE OF TIME AND MONEY

Having the intermediate rough installed is the easy part. Servicing it will be a different matter. It is essential to have a clear picture of what is happening in the rootzone. Consider the following:

- Aeration and topdressing requirements are increased.
- Thatch and organic layers are more difficult to target.
- Turfline integrity is decreased.
- Turf recovery on small tees, greens after falling behind on aerification, and sand topdressing programs are more difficult to maintain.
- Stimpmeter readings of 8 to 9 are now more prevalent in the right direction every day of the week.
- Water will result in less turf color persist. Golfers should be interested to know that less water is needed to maintain the fairways and roughs.
- A “playlist” of instructions is necessary to get the best results.
- Keeping the intermediate rough as a 4-inch surface is not realistic.