

The USGA Green Section Record



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Understanding and Appreciating Firmness

Our mentors taught us that firm is good. Now we have to spread the word.

by [Stanley J. Zontek](#), director



Links golf has always had a special appeal for its tight lies, firmness, and the ground game. Achieving firmness through using less water, managing thatch, and good soil drainage should provide excellent golf course playability - all part of a more sustainable golf course on either side of the Atlantic. (St. Andrews Links)

The USGA, golfers, and turf managers have long recognized the link between firmness, good golf, and sustainable turf management. An article entitled "Firm Greens, Best for You and the Course" by Bob Sommers, former managing editor of Golf Journal, appeared in the April 1966 issue of the magazine. While the intent of this article centers on irrigation practices, the point then and now remains that firm greens are best for golf.

Today, this desire for the same type of firmness extends to all areas of the golf course. Firm tees provide better footing in comparison to soft, unstable footing on a thatchy and often wet tee. On fairways, the appeal of the traditional links golf courses of the British Isles has always been their firmness, tight lies, and ball roll - the ground game. This is in comparison to the traditional American style of golf and golf course design, where the primary emphasis is on the air game and less emphasis on the ground game. How greens hold a shot has always been part of our vernacular.

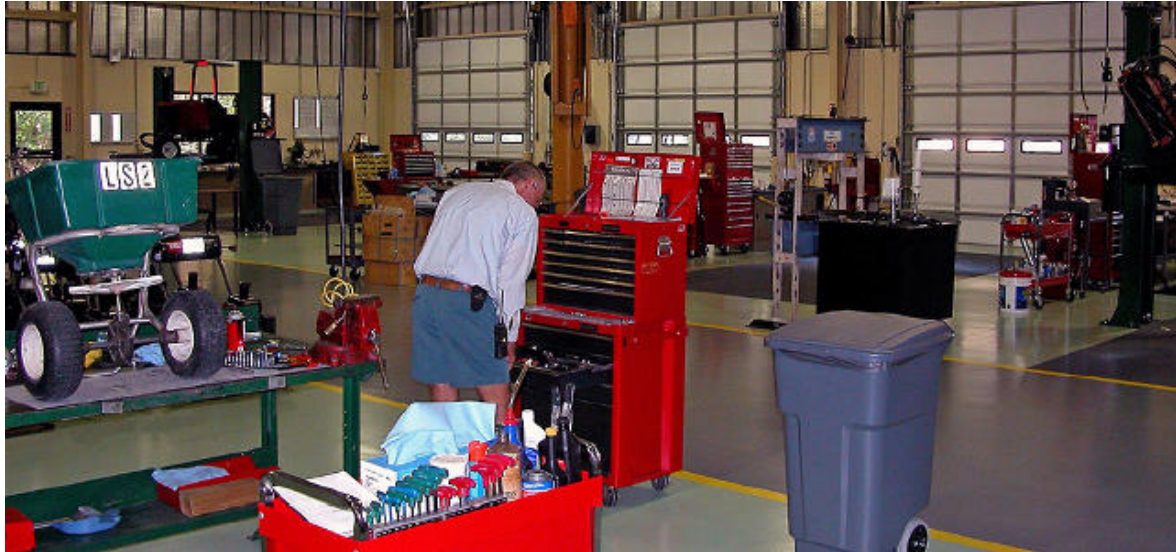
In addition to having firm greens, putting green approaches also should be firm, especially in situations where the design of the green allows, if not demands, a pitch-

and-run shot to have the ball bounce and run onto a forward hole location. Agronomically, firmness is an integral part of both good golf and good turfgrass management. Both can and should coexist. But how? [Read the rest of this article.](#)

The Value of a Qualified Equipment Manager

Modern high-tech equipment makes a turfgrass equipment manager essential.

by [Todd Lowe](#), USGA, and Stephen Tucker, Ritz Carlton



Golf course management has changed considerably. As mower technology, turfgrass genetics, and irrigation systems have evolved, so too have golfer expectations for year-round premium turf conditioning. Today's golf course superintendents must consistently provide championship-like playing conditions while developing strategies to protect the environment.

To accomplish this task, key staff at the course have taken on more responsibility so that few golf courses now operate without assistant golf course superintendents and equipment managers. In fact, many courses also have second assistants, integrated pest managers, and irrigation and equipment technicians. It takes a load off the backs of golf course superintendents to have turfgrass equipment managers who implement preventative maintenance on golf course equipment so that everything runs smoothly. [Read the rest of this article.](#)

Free Green Section Webcast Thursday, November 11, 2010 at 10:00 CST

Summer 2010 - Lessons Learned for Bentgrass Management

by [Charles "Bud" White](#), director

2010 has been more than a challenging year in the lower Midwest for golf course turf. We started out with the worst winterkill on bermudagrass since 1989 and then experienced a summer that brought on the most bentgrass loss in at least ten years.

Many of the problems on bentgrass could have been avoided if golfers had more reasonable expectations of speed and firmness. Waiting until temperatures reach 100 degrees before raising cutting heights is too late to protect the bentgrass from the weeks of summer stress ahead. This webcast looks deeper into this problem and determines what the plans should be for the summer of 2011 and beyond.

This webcast is free and open to everyone. You will need to properly install the Microsoft Live Meeting CLIENT on your PC.

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**Bud White, director,
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Summer Lessons Learned In 2010

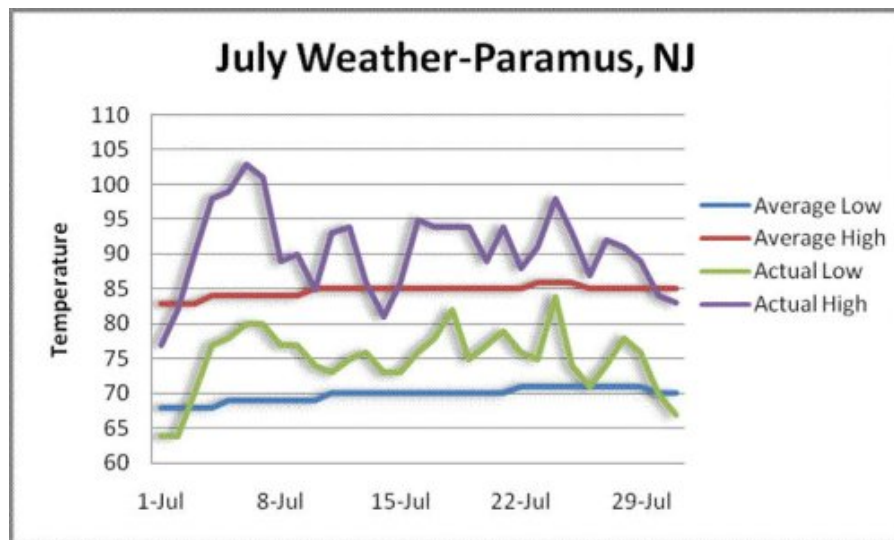


A Northeast Regional Update

by [Adam Moeller](#), agronomist

As golf courses in the Northeast transition into late fall, many golfers, course officials, and golf course superintendents continue to reflect on the summer of 2010. The simple description of the summer conditions can be summed up with two words...extremely hot. The summer weather wreaked havoc for many golf courses, especially if certain infrastructure problems existed. For instance,

putting greens growing in microclimates with shade and/or airflow problems were often the first to decline. Greens with poor drainage characteristics, combined with an ill-timed heavy rainfall and hot weather, likely had problems. Now that the dust has settled, it is important to identify where improvements can be made to prevent similar problems from arising during the next tough summer. [Read on to see some common infrastructure problems.](#)



July was the hottest month of the summer for the majority of the Northeast Region, and many courses experienced problems as a result of the stressful weather, and damage severity often was related directly to certain infrastructure problems that exist on the golf course. Correcting these issues will pay off the next time the course experiences stressful weather. Data source: weatherunderground.com.

Leaves And Planning

A North Central Regional Update

by [R.A. \(Bob\) Brame](#), director



This update discusses:

1. Weather patterns that have made it difficult to establish seed in areas damaged by the past summer and offers a possible solution.
2. A solution to leaf clean-up.
3. Upcoming conferences you will want to attend.

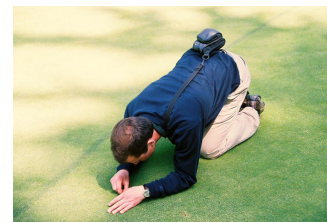
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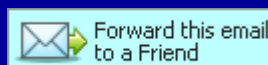
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