

# The USGA Green Section Record



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## So You Think You Want To Play Championship Conditions All The Time?

***Why we can't and, perhaps more important, why we shouldn't.***  
by [Derf Soller](#), agronomist



***Championship conditions (and courses) may be too much for most golfers. See how your game compares to others based on nationwide handicap statistics by [reading the rest of this article](#).***

Golfer education is more important today than ever. Golf courses everywhere are facing decreasing budgets and increased scrutiny of product use and water management. Superintendents and course officials are obligated to work within the variable parameters of nature and increased legislation. Allied golf associations need to help golfers understand the amazing commitment of time and resources it takes to provide championship conditions. Numerous factors need to be considered before a course even starts down the "championship conditions" road.

We all love what we see on television. It is important for golfers to realize that for most championship events, a year or more of preparation has been devoted solely for that four or five-day period, for one week in a given year. The playing and, more important, the maintaining of championship conditions is much more difficult than it looks. It is hard on a course's wallet, and it can be even harder on golfers' egos!

This article explains why conditions required and achieved for championship events are unattainable on a long-term basis for any golf facility and may not be in the best interests

of many. [Read the rest of this article.](#)

## Core Cultivation: Timing is Everything

### ***Understanding the risks of coring at non-traditional times.***

by [Adam Moeller](#), *agronomist*

Core cultivation is a great way to rejuvenate putting greens, improve long-term turf performance, and maintain adequate drainage and soil oxygen levels. The short list of benefits associated with coring includes: rootzone modification, thatch management, improved gas exchange, increased drainage and rooting, compaction relief, and alleviation of rootzone layering.

There are traditional windows of activity for coring putting greens, but superintendents and course officials have pulled the coring schedule earlier and pushed it well beyond the traditional dates over the past decade in response to the demand for flawless conditions throughout the season.

This article focuses on the potential agronomic impacts of coring in nontraditional time periods. [Read the rest of this article.](#)



***Scheduling core cultivation can be very challenging. Understanding the risks associated with coring at non-traditional times helps course officials make the best choice.***

## There Is No Time Like the Present



### **A North Central Regional Update**

by [Bob Vavrek](#), *senior agronomist*

Countless courses have put cultivation and topdressing programs for greens on the back burner during the past few years. No time, no labor, no money, inadequate equipment, surface disruption and golfer dissatisfaction are just some of the reasons used to justify the failure to core and sand greens at appropriate intervals. As reasons go, they aren't all that bad, considering the sluggish golf economy.

What is bad is the dense layer of spongy organic matter accumulation that quickly developed when these basic maintenance practices were neglected. Up until this year, the past several summers have been very mild. Thatchy greens usually perform quite well as long as the weather cooperates. But, this summer's weather was exceptionally stressful, and numerous courses had to "pay the piper" with respect to severe turf losses on thatchy greens caused by heat stress, root decline, disease activity and wet wilt. [Read the rest of this article.](#)



***Topdressing and core cultivation were neglected, and an undesirable layer of thatch developed in the upper root zone of this green. Thatchy greens remain soft and spongy for long periods of time after irrigation or rainfall, and golfers will notice deep, pitted ball marks. To make matters worse, soft, wet greens are highly susceptible to a myriad of agronomic problems, such as scalping, wet wilt and Poa annua encroachment.***

# Florida Hosts Two USGA Championships



## A Florida Regional Update

by [Todd Lowe](#), agronomist

Competitive golf has been a foundation of the USGA since 1894, with the first national championships being the U.S. Amateur, U.S. Open, and U.S. Women's Amateur. The USGA now conducts more than 13 national championships each year, but the Florida region has had relatively few national championships. To have two championships in one year, though, is indeed remarkable. In the last ten years we have played host to just five events, including 2010. Florida has many excellent golf courses that can test the best players in the world. However, our weather is unpredictable and sometimes unbearable in summer, when championships are conducted. With more than 60 inches of rainfall annually, and concerns with hurricanes, it makes it difficult to schedule a week-long golf event in our region.



The Men's Senior Amateur was conducted at Lake Nona Golf & Country Club in Orlando October 2 - 7, and the Women's Senior Amateur was conducted at Fiddlesticks Country Club, in Fort Myers, the following week. Both championships went off without a hitch and tested the skills of each competitor.

Championships not only provide a break from routine tasks, but they allow interaction with USGA staff from other departments. Representatives from championships, handicapping, Rules, and even information technology come from Golf House in Far Hills, NJ to provide an excellent experience for the competitors. The Green Section provides agronomic advice for each golf course on several occasions prior to the championship, and then assists with golf course maintenance during the event.

No championships are on the immediate horizon for Florida, but I am hopeful that more will be held here in the future. If your club would like to host an event, contact the United States Golf Association.

## Fall, Foliage, and Fertilizer

### A Mid-Atlantic Regional Update

by [Keith Happ](#), senior agronomist

With the recent significant rainfalls, drought warnings have been lifted as soil moisture levels have been replenished. Low soil moisture was the primary limiting factor that affected various recovery programs, but recent visits have provided evidence that recovery is well underway.

Fall is the time for renovation and preparation for the change in seasons. Aeration is completed, grass seed is sowed, sod is positioned, and tired grass is rejuvenated. Coring, solid tine, or slice aeration are options, but doing nothing at all should not be a consideration. Aeration is messy, but essential. Many superintendents adjusted their renovations this season as dictated by the weather. Certain programs could not be performed simply due to the fact that





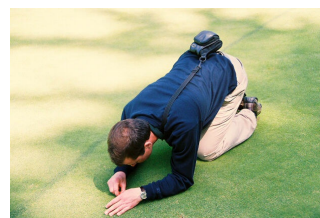
more damage than recovery may have occurred, but this adjustment does not mean that necessary programs can be postponed until next spring. Some form of soil aeration should be conducted on all playing surfaces this fall. Choose the best option for your operation. [Read the rest of this article.](#)

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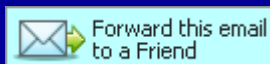
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