



GREEN SECTION RECORD



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James T. Snow, Green Section National Director To Retire

35 years of service to the USGA and the game of golf

by the USGA Green Section staff



Who would have guessed that a kid that grew up on an apple orchard in Trumansburg, NY and worked as the greenkeeper of the Taughannock Golf & Country Club (now Trumansburg Golf Course) would end up as one of golf's preeminent leaders. James T. Snow, National Director of the USGA Green Section since 1990, has announced his retirement effective at the end of this year.

Jim began his career with the USGA Green Section in 1976. He served as an agronomist in the Northeast Region from 1977 to 1982, and then as director of the Northeast Region from 1982 to 1990. In 1990 he assumed his current role as national director. During his tenure, his numerous responsibilities included overseeing the Turf Advisory Service and a staff of 18 agronomists, the Construction Education Program, the Turfgrass and Environmental Research Program, and the Green Section Education Program. A prolific writer, he also skillfully guided the *Green Section Record* magazine as its editor.

One of Jim's strength is fostering partnerships. In 1991, he vigorously supported the creation of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses. Under his direction, the USGA contributed more than \$1.5 million since the program's creation to assist its growth in becoming an award-winning education and certification program that helps golf courses protect the environment and the natural heritage of the game of golf. He also secured a \$1 million grant from the USGA to help fund and support the Turfgrass Information File (TGIF) at Michigan State University, the largest turfgrass database in the world. He has been a longtime advocate of turfgrass research issues concerning golf turf. Thanks to Jim's leadership, since 1983 the USGA has provided more than \$31 million to fund turf and environmental research across the country, effectively impacting golf courses around the world.

From seasonal golf course worker, to greenkeeper, to agronomist, to National Director of the USGA Green Section, Jim has never wavered in his love for the game of golf and the environment in which it is played. Kimberly Erusha, PhD, has been named to succeed Jim as managing director of the Green Section.

All Things Considered - A Green Section Staff Opinion

Not perfect, but different shades of green

by [Darin S. Bevard](#), senior agronomist, Mid-Atlantic Region



Tolerating isolated areas of off-color turf under stressful weather conditions can allow for better, more consistent playability to be provided on a daily basis. Brown grass is not necessarily dead grass. These areas recover quickly with more favorable weather and rain.

When did the visual aspects of the golf course become so important at the expense of playability to the average golfer? We routinely see golf courses that provide superb playability: firm, fast conditions and an overall attractive appearance under stressful weather conditions. Yet many golfers seem to focus on small areas of wear or off-color grass that are present on most golf courses during the heat of the summer. They choose to ignore the many positives that a given golf experience provides and emphasize the bad. This raises the question of whether aesthetics have become more important than playability in the daily maintenance of the golf course. The golf course needs to be attractive to golfers, but there is a difference between off-color or dormant grass and dead grass. This is a very important distinction! Dead grass is not good for anybody. The increased emphasis on firm and fast has created a lot of debate, and many golf courses have embraced this concept. Unfortunately, the exact appearance of the golf course as it relates to providing firm conditioning varies from region to region and even golf course to golf course. Most people seem to agree this is a good idea, especially at some other golf course. Far fewer people agree on how it should manifest itself at their golf course.

[Read the rest of this article](#)

Regional Updates



Southeast Region

by [Chris Hartwiger](#), senior agronomist

Stressed Out!

An emerging technique we call 'selective replacement' is giving welcome relief to stressed turf.

Life on the road as an agronomist can be stressful at times. When we get worn down and stressed out near the end of the year, one of our favorite past-times is to trade our soil probe for a set of golf clubs and play golf. In a few of our casual



(L) Picture 1: Diamond zoysiagrass was sodded on the back right of this ultradwarf bermudagrass putting green due to extensive shade caused by a large tree. The Diamond has much better shade

rounds of golf recently, we observed a technique that superintendents are using to deal with chronically

stressed turf on putting greens. These superintendents are foregoing the traditional model of using one turf species on the surface and are planting different turf species in areas that perform poorly year after year. This observation served as a great reminder that there is more than one way to meet an objective on a golf course. This update will detail what we have seen, comment on how it's working, and speculate about future applications.

tolerance than an ultradwarf, and putting quality has improved greatly in this area. (R) Picture 2: A small section of the clean-up lap on this bentgrass putting green was resodded with an ultradwarf bermudagrass. The ultradwarf handles on/off traffic and mower stress in the clean-up lap better, and playing quality has improved greatly in this area.

[Read the rest of this update](#)



North Central Region

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

Mowing And Leaf Cleanup, Despite The Wet

With Thanksgiving in the rearview mirror, course maintenance and projects are coming to an end or slowing significantly as weather conditions deteriorate throughout the North Central Region. Nonetheless, it is important to stay the course with rough mowing and leaf cleanup, as needed, to maximize flexibility next spring.

Research has shown (<http://www.agry.purdue.edu/turf/report/1999/page24.htm>), and field observation continues to endorse, mulching leaves to be the most efficient cleanup strategy. Blowing leaves into the rough and then mulching/pulverizing while mowing offers very good results, while avoiding having to remove and dispose of fallen leaves. There are occasions when removal is the only option, but it is better avoided if at all possible, and in most cases it is avoidable.



Blowing leaves into the rough and then mulching them with rough mowers offers cost- effective and environmentally friendly cleanup.

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Southwest Region

by [Brian Whitlark](#), agronomist

Cool Season Turf Outcompetes Underlying Bermudagrass For Water

This summer, ultradwarf bermudagrass greens struggled to recover from fall overseeding in the desert southwest. Although not all courses that struggled to recover from winter overseeding experienced the same challenges, there was one issue that was common in poorly performing greens. This update will offer suggestions to overcome this problem with proper management this winter.



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Turf Twisters

Are green covers worth the investment?

Q: The last two winters have been cold enough to cause winter damage on bermudagrass greens. Some still believe that winter covers are not worth the investment. Do covers reduce the potential for winter damage to bermudagrass greens, and is 'icing' just as effective as covers? (TX)

A: Covers are a must for bermudagrass greens in locations far enough north to receive freezing temperatures in the winter months. Research has clearly shown that soil temperatures can be 10-12°F warmer under covers than not covered. Icing greens, however, seems similar in theory but has not been documented as an alternative to covers with the same effectiveness.



Does sand decrease green speed?

Q: Our superintendent applies sand to the putting greens, sometimes on a weekly basis during the peak winter golfing season. Why is this practice performed in winter, and does it decrease green speed? (Florida)

A: Bermudagrass golf courses in the southern regions, especially South Florida, are generally maintained more aggressively than golf courses in other regions. Bermudagrass produces a stem layer that must be thinned out through summertime core aeration, vertical mowing and sand topdressing. However, grooming (light verticutting or brushing) and periodic light sand topdressing are also needed in the winter months if bermudagrass is still actively growing; otherwise, putting greens become inconsistent and bumpy. The amount of sand applied and frequency of application for golf course putting greens is determined by the growth rate of the turfgrass and cannot be determined simply on a calendar basis. Warm temperatures can occur even during the winter months, causing the turf to grow. A thin layer of sand that is easily worked into the turf canopy does not cause the putting speeds to drop, but actually causes a slight increase in putting speed and improves surface smoothness.



Why are our approaches to our greens soft?

Q: Our golf course maintenance philosophy has been adjusted to include a greater emphasis on firm conditions. The greens and fairways are usually firm, but our approaches are always soft. Why would this be and how can we fix it?

A: Approaches typically receive less golf cart traffic and lighter mowing equipment compared to fairways, leading to higher thatch buildup, which is often a major cause of soft conditions. Greens usually receive more intensive aeration, verticutting, and topdressing to keep thatch levels under control, which improve firmness. Finally, take a look at the irrigation differences between greens and approaches. Hand watering should be used as much as resources permit on the greens. In most cases, hand watering isn't an option for the approaches. As a result, reliance on automatic overhead irrigation is needed for the approaches, which can lead to overwatering if the design doesn't provide independent control. The best solution to your soft approaches is to aerate, verticut, and topdress the approaches more often, ideally each time the greens receive these inputs. Adjusting the irrigation design may be necessary as well.



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by the USGA Green Section Staff

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