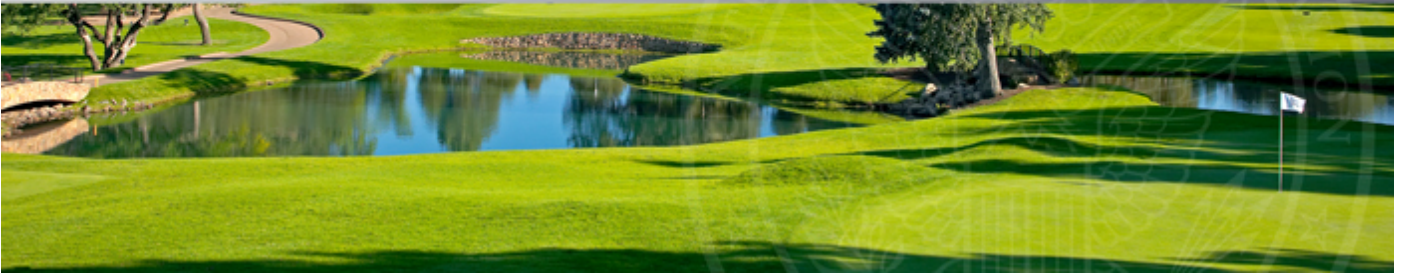




# GREEN SECTION RECORD



July 22, 2011 -- Volume 49, Number 29

## The Hidden Value Of Hosting A USGA Competition

### **There's a lot more than meets the eye.**

*by Chris Carson, superintendent, Echo Lake CC, Westfield, N.J*

In 1990, Echo Lake Country Club offered to the USGA to host the 1994 U.S. Junior Amateur Championship. We had many reasons for making this offer, but the most important was to give back to the game. There were many enthusiastic supporters of this effort, but there were also members who actively opposed the idea, concerned that we were "giving away" our course during the season.

We took those concerns seriously during our four-year planning process, and we worked hard to convince critics that the effort was not only good for golf, but that our club would benefit as well. Little did we know how great that benefit would be.

Our first steps were to initiate long-range planning for the event. We asked ourselves what we needed to do to prepare for the championship, and we put it all down on spreadsheets. We looked at all aspects of our club, from parking to the clubhouse and locker rooms to the golf course itself. We didn't realize it at the time, but this process was, in effect, a strategic planning exercise for our club. The fact that we had committed to a deadline for the championship caused us to sharply focus on doing what we could to make sure our club was prepared to be a successful host.

Site visits to the 1991, 1992, and 1993 championships gave us a good idea of how the event would run and of the needs of the players and their families. We also determined what would be required of the members who would serve as player hosts during the week. From these visits, and with the support of the USGA, we developed timetables, established expectations of how our members and staff would interact, and identified a few areas of weakness at our own club, some of which were a surprise to us

[Read the rest of this article](#)



The planning process started prior to Echo Lake hosting its first national championship. This effort resulted in many improvements to the course and facility. Ultimately, it culminated in the development of a long-range master plan for the golf course.

## Pictures That Send Valuable Messages This Summer

### **What a difference a breeze makes**

*photo by Adam Moeller, USGA Green Section*

Check out the eight degree temperature difference in this image. The reading on the left was taken on a putting green that received very limited air movement across the surface as a result of surrounding trees. The reading on the right was taken on a green that received good airflow.

In addition to the lower temperature, the green that receives plenty of air movement is far less prone to disease and other stresses.

If both greens are syringed, which one will benefit the most? As the wind moves across a green with good air movement the surface temperature will drop even further, much like the cooling effect that occurs when the wind blows across the sweat on your arms on a hot day.



### **Don't give up on turf that is severely stressed from heat and drought**

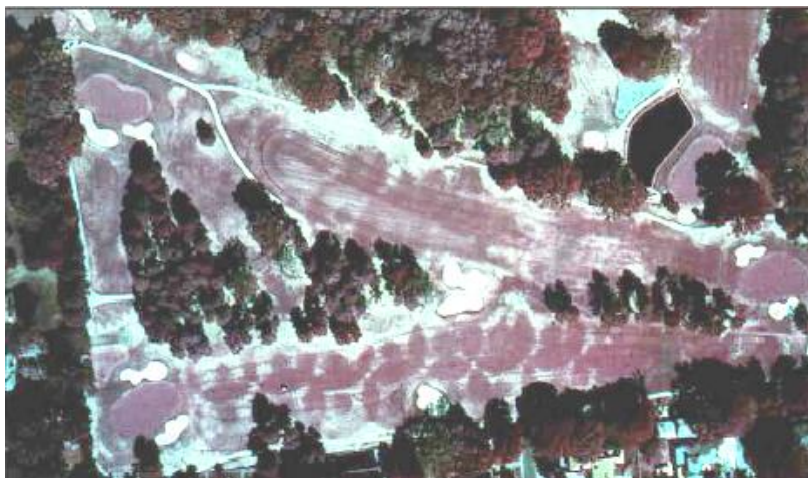
*photo by Kyle Sweet, superintendent, Sanctuary Golf Club, Florida*

Drought-stressed fairways are a common sight in much of the country this summer. Fortunately, brown does not have to mean dead - particularly for the warm-season grasses. Many of these grasses enter a state of semi-dormancy when prolonged droughts are combined with high heat. Superintendents are often pleasantly surprised at how well the turf recovers once the rains return.

A little common sense is important here. Turf that is dormant for any reason is highly prone to injury from traffic - particularly golf carts. When the rains do come back, the turf that was protected from concentrated wear will have a much better chance of survival and regrowth.



## Now is the time to get airborne



There is nothing like a severe drought to make every failing in an irrigation system painfully obvious. You can be sure that if it looks bad on the ground it will look even worse from the air.

If your golf course is suffering from a lack of rain and/or poor irrigation coverage, now is the time to hire an aerial photographer. Consider asking for infrared pictures like the one shown to the left as they highlight temperature differences even more graphically.

Even if you can't afford to hire an aerial photographer, make the time to get out and take some of your own photos to document the problem areas.

## Regional Updates



### North Central Region

#### ***Don't forget to brush***

by [Bob Vavrek](#), senior agronomist

Brush your teeth every morning, evening and after each meal. Most of us have had this mantra drilled into our daily routine by concerned moms and family dentists throughout our childhood. Brushing, we are told, helps prevent the need for a more painful type of drilling. In general, we view the act of brushing as something positive.

Oral hygiene probably has nothing to do with the fact that an increasing number of courses across the North-Central Region are rediscovering the benefits of brushing greens to smooth and condition the playing surfaces, other than to reinforce the concept that brushing something is inherently good. Furthermore, the options superintendents have regarding equipment for brushing greens seem endless. There are powered rotary brushes, topdressing dragmats, and a variety of small brushes attached to mowers that tickle the turf a few inches in front of the cutting unit. A standard cocoa mat can be a very effective tool to gently brush a surface during stressful weather and who is to say you couldn't just drag a stiff bristled shop broom across a green to stand up the turf prior to mowing?



Brushes for conditioning putting greens come in all shapes and sizes. A basic brush can be installed just ahead of the cutting unit of a walk behind or triplex mower.

[Read the rest of this update.](#)



### Southwest Region

#### ***Wakeup call***

by [Brian Whitlark](#), agronomist

Transition from overseeded cool season grasses, such as *Poa trivialis*, bentgrass and fine fescues to bermudagrass, has historically been fairly seamless on putting surfaces in the Southwest. That is, until this year. Roughly 20% of golf courses are experiencing transition woes this summer on greens. Historically, that number is less than 5%. That being the case, why did courses see such problems with putting green transition this year?

Greens that experienced the weakest bermudagrass recovery are likely suffering due to a combination of factors, including one or more of the following:



- Overseeded greens that were aggressively prepared for seeding. There has been a trend in preparing for overseeding with less aggressive methods, but some turf managers are forced to conduct thatch and organic matter reduction tactics at overseeding time, which will diminish bermudagrass recovery the following spring.
- In localized areas, especially in Tucson, winter temperatures dipped down to 10°F, and experienced three to four days without exceeding the freezing mark. This cold snap, when combined with additional stresses, likely led to poor transition.
- There has been a slight trend to increase overseeding rates to unimaginable levels. In some cases, more than 30 lbs of *Poa trivialis* has been applied per 1,000 ft<sup>2</sup>. At least one turf manager is confident (and willing to admit) that such a high density of *Poa trivialis* plants led to poor bermudagrass recovery.
- Winter desiccation likely played a large role in many weak areas, especially on slopes and mounds. When freezing temperatures may be an everyday occurrence, it is common to withhold irrigation in an effort to avoid frost.

A combination of low overnight temperatures, extended periods where the mercury did not rise above freezing, aggressive overseeding preparation and winter desiccation, all contributed to poor bermudagrass recovery from overseeding in southern Arizona.

Although turf managers are unable to control the weather, they should consider incorporating the following strategies to minimize transition problems in the future:

[\*\*Read the rest of this update.\*\*](#)



## Mid-Atlantic Region

### **Long summer days equate to intense irrigation management**

by [Keith Happ](#), senior agronomist

They are referred to as *the dog days of summer* and the summer is well underway. The Mid-Atlantic Region is in the grip of high temperatures, accompanied by fluctuations in humidity. When this combination of weather factors occurs, irrigation management becomes the number one priority. Many superintendents and their crews are putting in long hours by cooling the turf and judiciously applying water only where and when it's necessary.

This month we have experienced radical and rapid changes in the humidity levels, and these changes are stressful on fine golf course turf. While low humidity is a comfortable condition for golfers, it is much more stressful on turfgrass. The turf cools itself by releasing water (transpiration) to the atmosphere. During high temperatures and low humidity this cooling process uses a great deal of stored energy from the roots. Conversely, high humidity conditions place stress on both the golfers and the turf. When the air is saturated with moisture, the turf is not under the same level of stress. Simply put, the plant is not losing as much water to the atmosphere, and its cooling process is not as efficient.

[\*\*Read the rest of this update.\*\*](#)

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by the USGA Green Section Staff

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