



# GREEN SECTION RECORD

2012 U.S. Open  
June 11-17  
The Olympic Club  
San Francisco, California



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## Are You Ready For The U.S. Open?

**Here are a few items that might provide a little extra insight into our national championship**

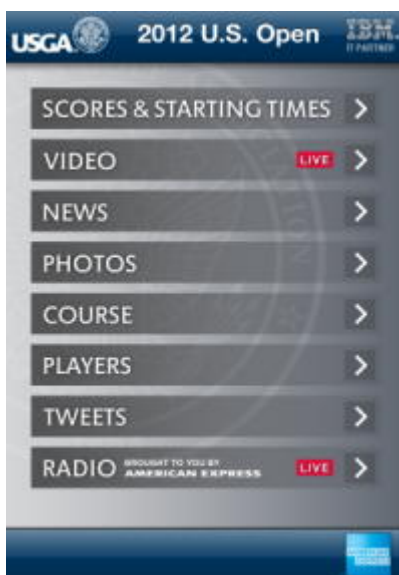
*by the Green Section Staff*

### Up-to-date inside information

Follow the action as it unfolds. Visit the official website of the 112<sup>th</sup> U.S. Open for real-time scoring, live HD video streaming, interactive play tracking and the latest Championship news and photos. [usopen.com](http://usopen.com) also gives fans the opportunity to experience the challenging holes at The Olympic Club by playing the Virtual U.S. Open! Players who make the cut will qualify for a chance to win airfare, lodging and tickets to the 2013 U.S. Open at Merion Golf Club.

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### USGA Green Section Podcast - Behind The Scenes At The U.S. Open

Listen to Director of Golf Course Operations Pat Finlen and USGA Green Section Agronomist Pat Gross discuss the agronomic preparations of The Olympic Club for the 2012 U.S. Open. Green Section Managing Director Kimberly Erusha interviews the two men in this brief but entertaining podcast. [Listen to the podcast](#)

### And From The King

Following his press conference shortly after losing seven strokes to Billy Casper over the last nine holes of the 1966 U.S. Open (also at The Olympic Club), Arnold Palmer faced a difficult time forcing his way through a horde of his fans crowded around the entrance to the press facility. A USGA staff member suggested he slip out the back way and be driven to the clubhouse in a golf cart. Palmer refused, saying he'd take his chances with the fans. He added, "Besides, I deserve whatever they do to me." (From Robert Sommers book, "Golf Anecdotes").



Pat Finlen (left) and Pat Gross (right) go over course preparations for the U.S. Open at The Olympic Club.

## Practice Like A Pro

### Two simple adjustments to the way you practice will result in less wear and faster recovery of range tees.

by Ty McClellan, USGA Green Section

Most of us will never play like a professional, but that should not stop us from practicing like one. Attend a professional golf event and you will notice a unique, linear pattern of divots on the practice tee. This article will teach you how to make two simple adjustments to your practice routine that will give you something in common with your favorite touring professional and produce a better conditioned practice range tee all season long for you and the rest of the golfing community to enjoy.

For practice range tees established with cool-season turfgrasses, such as creeping bentgrass or Kentucky bluegrass, late July and early August usually mark the time when golfers complain about excessive divots. Heavy play combined with stressful midsummer conditions leaves little opportunity for seedling establishment or regenerative growth of surrounding turf into divots. For bermudagrass, zoysiagrass, or any other warm-season species, insufficient turf coverage generally becomes most apparent in late spring or early summer just as the turf is breaking winter dormancy following months of practice range use. In either case, divots are removed faster than the turf can recover. Oftentimes, poor turf coverage on a practice tee indicates that it is simply undersized for the amount of play received, i.e., there is not enough time for turf recovery before tee stations are returned to previous locations.



Today's golfer loves to practice, but certain practice habits on the range tee can result in more wear to the turf than others.

[Read the rest of this article](#)



# Report Card For Turfgrass

The turf industry depends on the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) to grade the performance of new and existing turfgrass cultivars.

*by Dr. Jeff Nus, USGA Green Section*



**Much advancement in turfgrass quality has been made over the past few decades, including resistance to common turfgrass diseases such as leaf spot. The older susceptible Kenblue Kentucky bluegrass cultivar (left) is compared to the newer resistant cultivar Princeton (right).**

The turfgrass industry has many players - numerous organizations that serve their members and provide benefit to us all. Since 1894, the USGA has served the game in many ways from hosting national championships, maintaining equipment standards, developing rules, providing a handicap system, to funding turfgrass and environmental research and extending agronomic expertise to our nation's golf courses. Other organizations also provide valuable services to the industry. One such organization is the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program, and it plays an essential role in evaluating the very turfgrasses on which this game is played.

The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) is a cooperative effort between the non-profit NTEP, Inc., and the United States Department of Agriculture and is headquartered at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center in Beltsville, Md. From its inception in 1980, NTEP's goal has been to coordinate a nationwide network of universities to grade and report the performance of new and existing turfgrass cultivars. With an estimated over 50 million acres of the United States covered by turfgrass, it is an important responsibility for the third largest crop in America.

[Read the rest of this article](#)

## Turf Reduction Template

**A guideline for reducing turf acreage while maintaining golf course quality.**

*by Patrick Gross, USGA Green Section and Todd Eckenrode, golf course architect and principal with Origins Golf Design*

How much turf does a golf course really need? Drought and economic issues coupled with a sharp increase in the price of water have course owners and superintendents reevaluating their golf courses and making difficult decisions on where to best utilize shrinking resources. A common strategy is to reduce the amount of water and resources evenly over the entire golf course. A different approach is to take the same amount of resources and apply them to a reduced amount of turf acreage. When considering a turf reduction project, the question then becomes what to cut and what to keep.

A 2007 survey published by The Environmental Institute for Golf indicated that the average size of an 18-hole course in the United States is 150 acres, of which 100 acres is maintained turfgrass. And of the 100 acres of maintained turfgrass, just over half (51 acres) is designated as rough and out-of-play areas.<sup>1</sup> Reducing the amount of rough and eliminating turf in non-play areas create excellent opportunities to save money by reducing

costs for irrigation, fertilizers and other turf care products, mowing, and maintenance.

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Encircling a grove of trees with a three- to four-inch layer of a playable mulch material is an effective method to eliminate turf and reduce water consumption.

## All Things Considered - A Green Section Staff Opinion

### Avoid Temporary Memory Loss

Many simple tasks in every round of golf greatly impact agronomics and playing conditions.

*by Larry Gilhuly, USGA Green Section*



(Above left) Push back the turf that has been displaced once you remember to fix your ball mark. (Above right) Temporary loss of observational skills and driving where one shouldn't when the turf is stressed is immediately evident and can last a long time during the summer!

Let's face it, during a round of golf many different types of repetitive actions are made on each hole. These actions are not only with your golf clubs, but also include what you do before, after, and between every golf shot. The problem is that while a player's primary focus is on the shot itself and thinking about the next stroke, there apparently is a major issue with temporary memory loss in between shots. Read on to stir your memory on seven areas where temporary memory loss in your game can be detrimental to your golf course.

[Read the rest of this article](#)

## Regional Updates

The USGA Green Section agronomists see an amazing variety of issues and challenges as they visit golf courses across the country. Be sure to read the highlights of each region since many of the topics covered apply

to courses everywhere.



## Mid-Atlantic Region

### A Taste Of Summer

Golf courses in our region continue to report increased rounds. Superintendents are starting to report signs of wear and tear on high traffic areas of the golf course, but increased golfer traffic is a good problem to have. Our burst of summer in the last week of May was short-lived, but created a number of challenges for golf course superintendents. High heat and heavy rain are not a good combination at any time during our growing season. Cooler weather has returned for now, but we were reminded of how quickly the wrong weather conditions can create problems. These include...

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**Dollar spot pressure has been high this spring. Be sure to check the label on the fungicide used to ensure application rates (both water and chemical) are appropriate.**



## Southeast Region

### The Testing Continues (Hopefully)

In the mid-1990's, one of our favorite Turfgrass Advisory Visits each summer was at the Honors Course near Chattanooga, Tenn. where we had the pleasure of spending the day with golf course superintendent David Stone. Upon arrival, David would take us to his bentgrass trials on what was known as the "shady plots." With 27 varieties replicated four times each, we had 128 bentgrass plots staring at us. Without the use of a plot plan, David ordered us to pick out the best 10 and the worst 10 plots.

David kept the plots under stress all summer and it wasn't too hard to find the good ones and the bad ones. What was really amazing was how the same varieties kept finding their way into our top 10. Plots of A-1, A-4, and Crenshaw consistently rose to the top of the class. It's interesting to note that after about 20 years, some of these grasses now dominate the market while others have faded away. Nevertheless, it was clear that on-course testing of grasses at the Honors Course provided courses in the region beneficial information about summer performance.

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## North-Central Region

### Tall Grass Rough...Or Natural Rough?



It has become very common to see golf courses throughout the North Central Region allowing areas of the rough that are predominantly out of play to grow tall. This is sometimes called "no mow" rough, although one knockdown mowing in the fall or spring is normally performed to control the growth of volunteer trees and brush. The big question that has been discussed on numerous Turf Advisory Service visits this spring is should these areas be clean grass growth or truly natural rough?

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While establishing areas that are predominantly out-of-play to natural rough can be beneficial environmentally and help the budget, it will take good communication skills to win approval.



## Northeast Region

### Be Careful What You Wish For

Most of the turf I have observed in recent weeks has been performing well. Root development has been stronger than normal and cool-season brown patch and Waitea patch that was evident a few weeks ago seems to have subsided. Not surprisingly, the biggest problem I have seen and heard reported involves feeding damage from annual bluegrass weevil, but even that has been less significant than in the past. Thus, for most courses, it has been a good spring and a good start to the season.

Unfortunately, there are always some exceptions. For instance, winter injury was experienced in a few parts of southern Canada just north of Toronto and on fairways in the Montreal area. In other areas, drought conditions continue. Where rainfall has been heavy, fortunately, temperatures have remained moderate. Some courses may be wet, but for the most part turf is still performing well.

Undoubtedly, temperatures will rise in the coming weeks, and our traditional disease problems, namely summer patch and anthracnose, will likely begin to show themselves. The wet weather certainly can be a predisposing factor to the emergence of both diseases, and if rain continues, various *Pythium* problems will also begin to show up. All that is required is a stretch of really hot weather to cause turfgrass root systems to die back and increase disease pressure.

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## Northwest Region

### Mow The Rough, Please!

The United States Golf Association is busily preparing for the upcoming 2012 U.S. Open at The Olympic Club. Like all Opens, the rough will undoubtedly play a key role in the championship. The staff at the Olympic Club are already spending many hours making certain the roughs are prepared appropriately for the best players in the world. However, it is good to remember that Olympic is the only course having The U.S. Open this year.

In many recent visits throughout the Rocky Mountain Region Kentucky bluegrass roughs, in particular, are

growing exceptionally well - too well for the average golfer.

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## Florida Region



Perfect growing conditions this spring have made it difficult for many courses to keep up with rough mowing. U.S. Open-like roughs are not much fun for the average golfer and can result in lost balls, slow play, and high scores.

## Mole Cricket Hatch

A recent Turf Advisory Service visit found small mounds of soil on a practice green that resembled ant hills at first glance. On further inspection, the mounds had small tunnels that extended into the turf. A soap flush using one teaspoon of dish washing soap per gallon of water revealed several small mole cricket nymphs of different sizes emerging from the putting green.

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## Southwest Region

### Proactive Communication Yields Smoother Transition

It is that lovely time of year again in the desert southwest when ryegrass grows closer to an ugly grave and the underlying bermudagrass struggles to recover after being buried alive during fall overseeding. It is better to be proactive and alert golfers to the forthcoming change in golf course aesthetics, playability and more aggressive cultural practices that always seem to be associated with transition.

The following message is an example of how one turf manager set the expectations regarding the impending transition from ryegrass to the underlying bermudagrass. The letter was distributed to the membership via mass-email, through postings in the men's and women's locker room and each department head received a copy.

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