Six-year drought continues to plague Western United States golf courses

BY PETER BLAIS

The early-season precipitation news has been positive for Southern California — site of this year’s GCSAA International show — although the six-year drought is far from over.

The Southern California Metropolitan Water District reported precipitation was slightly above the normal 12 to 14 inches for the region for the year ending Sept. 30.

Additionally, forecasters predicted December weather patterns would bring heavy rainfalls to the coast, an encouraging start to the area’s prime four-month wet season.

But two-thirds of Southern California’s water is imported, according to water district spokesman Bob Gomperz. And there the news is mixed.

“We’ve been told we’ll receive as much as the aqueducts can handle from the Colorado River basin. But Northern California [primarily dependent on Sierra Nevada Mountains snowpack] is giving us just 10 percent of what we requested,” Gomperz said.

The Northern California allotment figure is preliminary. It could go higher when final figures are released in May, particularly if heavy early-December snows, which helped snowpack levels reach 50 percent of normal, continue through the winter, Gomperz said.

Does that have the golf industry ready to burst into a chorus of “Ding dong the drought is dead?”

No way, Dorothy.

“It’s rained heavily in spots. But the
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