



On The Road With The USGA—August 2008

By Bob Brame, regional director, Central Region

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Last month my update centered on the Women's Open Championship and, as scheduling would have it, this update is generated from the Senior Open Championship. What a contrast in climates and watering needs from Edina, Minnesota to Colorado Springs, Colorado. The wildlife also has changed a bit with black bears sighted during this morning's course setup. However, expanding on last month's update on water management, this has been a championship of hot temperatures, dry conditions, and very low relative humidity. The combination of 90 degrees and higher temperatures, very low relative humidity (10% to 20% midday), more than 6,000 feet elevation, and light breezes have led to demanding watering management.



Some of the watering at this year's Senior Open has been done during the night with sprinklers, but the use of sprinklers has been very conservative coming into the practice rounds and on through the championship. Hand watering has been the anchor on all surfaces and the sole means of watering putting surfaces. While pushing towards the dry end of the continuum is always the objective with golf turf management, there is a big difference between hot temperatures and low humidity as compared to hot and muggy (high humidity). As with other past championships, the USGA TruFirm device has been used at this year's Senior Open to aid the decision making process and guide water management. However, firmness data is secondary to visual observations and site specific knowledge about the course and local environment. When the turf wilts under foot traffic water must be applied regardless of firmness data.



The bottom line message continues to be that quality golf turf management hinges on water management. The task of water management involves weaving multiple factors with site specific knowledge about the golf course and weather patterns being key components. Hand watering/syringing also is vital to maintaining quality golf turf

no matter how good the irrigation system may be. Keep on keeping it dry.

Call or e-mail anytime—we're always available.

Source: Bob Brame

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