



Five Strategies That Will Make 2017 Better Than 2016

By Addison Barden, agronomist, Northeast Region | April 7, 2017



Follow these five simple steps to help prevent turf loss such as this, which was caused by untimely aeration and sand topdressing.

Whether challenged by drought or record-breaking heat, the 2016 season was difficult for most golf courses in the Northeast Region. These five successful and affordable strategies were common denominators among facilities that maintained healthy turfgrass last summer:

1. Think like the tortoise, not the hare – Last year, summer heat and humidity arrived early and dwelled late into the season. Keep this in mind when preparing for early season golf events. Low heights of cut, frequent mowing and other aggressive practices early in the season may not appear to have adverse effects on turf; but they weaken it and can have long-term consequences.

2. Plan for the worst, hope for the best – It is impossible to predict adverse weather so it's best to plan for it. Last summer, the northern half of the region experienced unprecedented drought conditions and many golf facilities did not have a drought-emergency plan. If you do not already have them, develop a [drought-emergency plan](#) and [water budget](#) this spring before it's too late.

3. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure – Golf facilities that regularly perform cultural practices to promote plant health are well-prepared to handle adverse weather. Practices such as venting, light and frequent sand topdressing, and reduced mowing frequency can all help turf survive through difficult conditions. This season, promote plant health by prioritizing beneficial culture practices.

4. Provide scheduling flexibility – Whether planning day-to-day maintenance or putting green aeration, build some flexibility into the agronomic calendar so critical cultural practices can be performed during advantageous weather conditions. Delaying cultural practices until the weather is suitable may create a short-term inconvenience, but any inconvenience is much better than long-term negative effects or turf loss.

5. Communicate, communicate, communicate – Keep golfers and other decision-makers up to date with projects and course conditions to prevent surprises. Additionally, meet with the golf professional throughout the season to keep them informed of playing conditions, turf health and upcoming cultural practices. For additional information that can help golfers learn more about important agronomic practices, check out the USGA Green Section [Fore the Golfer](#) article series.

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