



Climate is What We Expect, Weather is What We Get

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It has been a summer of weather extremes, with minimal rain throughout the region in May, near-record breaking rainfall in June, and typical hot, humid conditions in July. Despite weather extremes, golf courses are in fairly good condition as we wrap up the dog days of summer. However, turfgrass is stressed and the potential for injury is just a bad weather event away.

The recent hot, humid weather has led to a decline in root density and depth on putting greens. Reduced root density and depth is of concern during dry, high-sky days when turf can lose more water than can be taken up by compromised root systems. Therefore, extra attention is required to provide adequate moisture during low-humidity days. Although soils may be wet, turf can rapidly wilt under low-humidity conditions, so be prepared to syringe should this weather scenario occur.

Carefully managing soil moisture is especially important as high soil temperatures and moisture levels during June and July created an increase of available nitrogen through mineralization. Increased available nitrogen has



Note the long, dense root system from a putting green sampled May 19, 2015.

resulted in above average leaf growth, creating “puffy” conditions on putting greens. While excess leaf material is not necessarily a bad problem, putting greens can quickly decline if compromised root systems are unable to support the extra leaf tissue. Additionally, typical grooming and brushing procedures to remove excess leaf material often cannot be performed due to hot, humid conditions. Hopefully favorable weather projected for the next several weeks will allow practices like brushing and grooming to resume. Just remember, less is more when brushing, grooming and topdressing putting greens with stressed root systems.

Upcoming aeration schedules should be altered if weather conditions are not conducive for such an aggressive cultural practice. Flexibility is vital when scheduling aggressive cultural practices like aeration during this time of year. If weather conditions do not allow for grooming and/or brooming, then aeration is certainly out of the question. If rescheduling is needed, try not to sacrifice

originally planned aeration programs – i.e., tine size, spacing, topdressing, etc. – to fit aeration into a golfing calendar. Forgoing originally planned aeration practices can create issues down the road.

If weather forecasts remain true, improved weather conditions will allow for scheduled cultural practices and good playing conditions.



Here, notice the reduced root system of a green sampled July 30, 2015.

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