



## Every Cloud (of lack thereof) Has An Unseen Benefit

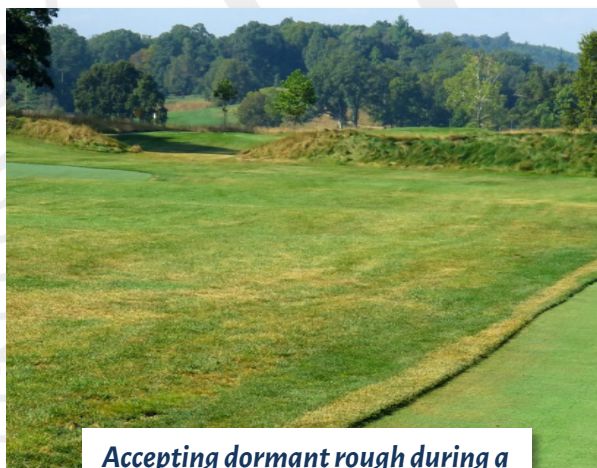
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Weather extremes make performing regular maintenance and, at times, maintaining turf health challenging. This season is no exception with long spells of wet and dry weather. Extreme weather can lead to turfgrass stress and disruptions to play, but it may highlight shortcomings in drainage and irrigation infrastructure on the golf course. Frequent rain in June and early July provided many challenges. Saturated soils predispose turf to environmental stress and mechanical injury. During hot weather, rapid decline of turf can occur.

There are two types of drainage and both are critical for limiting turf loss, minimizing disruption to play and maintaining good playing conditions. Proper **surface drainage** allows water to flow freely off turfgrass areas and is more impactful than subsurface drainage in terms of removing excessive water when heavy rain events occur. **Subsurface drainage** is especially important when slow, soaking rain events occur. Where positive surface drainage is challenging, subsurface drainage is necessary for moving excess water from sensitive areas. Early summer provided a great opportunity to see where drainage patterns and infrastructure were lacking. Hopefully, problem areas were noted for potential improvements.

Lately, the weather has been very dry, prompting many golf courses to evaluate their irrigation systems. Dry weather clearly highlights poor irrigation coverage



*Accepting dormant rough during a drought shows responsible use of the very precious resource, water.*

and other deficiencies from outdated systems that are incapable of watering accurately enough for turf managers to meet expectations for turf conditioning. Many golf courses currently are experiencing dormant rough and dry, stressed fairway edges. Unless dedicated rough heads are available, supplying enough water to keep the rough green leads to overwatering greens, tees and fairways. Overwatering critical areas negatively affects playability and leads to mechanical damage and turf health issues. Dry weather also provides a good opportunity to document irrigation coverage problems and determine whether individual irrigation heads are properly adjusted and performing well. Areas of off-color grass in areas with “good” irrigation coverage may indicate poor individual irrigation head performance. Now is a perfect time to take aerial photographs of your course.

Weather extremes certainly are an inconvenience and can be catastrophic to turf health and playability. Adding and removing water from a golf course are two very important aspects of turf management. Drainage systems are essential during wet periods and efficient irrigation systems are necessary during dry periods. Take advantage of weather extremes to determine where drainage and irrigation upgrades are needed.

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