



A Golf Course Conditioning Performance Review

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Course Conditioning Performance Review

At the close of the year, many businesses conduct a performance review of employees to understand where key objectives were met and where areas of improvement may exist. Golf facilities would benefit from a performance review of how the turf played this past season. The playability of a golf course is largely dependent upon the weather, but agronomic programs have an enormous impact on course conditions. Green speed and firmness often are areas where golfers want improvements in conditioning, so these are used as performance review examples.

If you battled green speed issues this season, investigate the potential problems closely with course officials. Green speeds naturally will be slower during periods of wet weather or high humidity, so it is important to be objective when evaluating course conditions. Often, green speed issues could be a result of too much organic matter – i.e., thatch – in the putting green soils or old mowers that do not produce a good quality of cut. Addressing these issues with key programs – e.g., increasing topdressing and cultivation or upgrading to modern equipment – should yield improvements in surface smoothness and green speed.

If the course didn't play as firm as desired during periods of dry weather, perhaps the underlying reasons are due to poor drainage or non-uniform irrigation coverage. Installing drainage and upgrading the irrigation system to improve coverage should yield improvements in course firmness. Identifying the key factors that impact course conditions at your facility through a performance

review will help determine where improvements are needed to meet playability targets.

Winter Play

Warm and relatively dry weather throughout much of the region has allowed many golf courses to remain open longer than usual, resulting in some welcomed late-season revenue. However, traffic on dormant or slow-growing turf can result in wear patterns, so the revenue gains might have some hidden consequences starting next season. The *Green Section Record* article [Winter Play- When to Go and When to Say No](#) is an excellent source of information when determining the risks/benefits of warm winter weather.

Leaf Management

Many courses in the region still are busy managing leaves, trying to keep key playing areas clean as they continue to fall. Trees can be great assets for golf courses, but the cost of managing leaves can be astronomical with some facilities spending thousands of dollars on leaf and debris removal every fall. The *Green Section Record* article [The Hidden Cost of Trees](#) provides some insight into the potential costs of managing leaves at courses with abundant trees. Removing a few trees for agronomic or playability purposes often is met with controversy, so remember there are hidden costs that need to be considered when analyzing trees at your facility.



Leaf management is a costly, time-consuming process for many courses throughout the fall.

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