



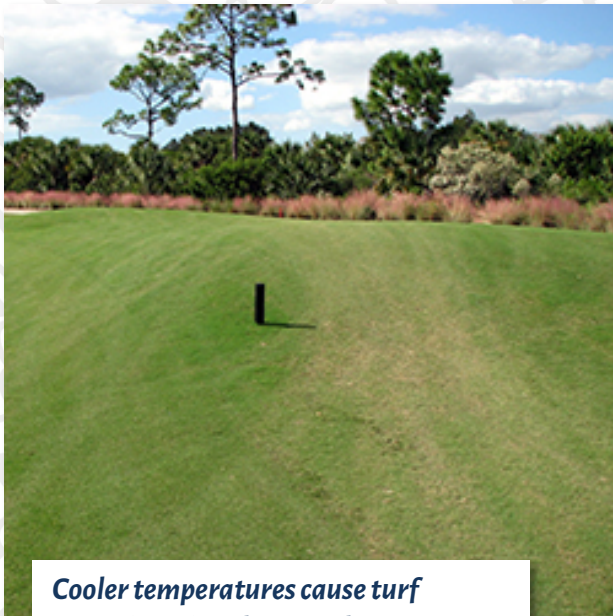
## Cold Weather Blemishes

By Todd Lowe, agronomist, Southeast Region

**December 2, 2014**

Golfers have been showing up over the past few weeks, escaping the cold weather of their northern homes. In fact, several facilities have been experiencing over 200 rounds per day for several weeks. Our region has also experienced lower soil temperatures, with several nights dropping below 50 Fahrenheit. The combination of these factors has caused some off-color

conditions on many golf courses.



*Cooler temperatures cause turf growth to shut down and cart-traffic stress to become more noticeable.*

The degree of damage observed is determined by the intensity of each stress. Less damage occurs with moderate cart traffic/temperatures, and more damage occurs with increased cart traffic and decreased soil temperatures. Also, off-color conditions appear worse on golf courses that have recently applied fertilizers, as there is a greater contrast between lush, green healthy fairways and yellow to tan

traffic areas. It is also apparent that some bermudagrass varieties or “off-

types” fare worse than others when it comes to traffic tolerance, as patches of turf begin to decline in otherwise healthy bermudagrass.

Ropes and stakes should be used to divert traffic and protect turf through the winter play season. The staff must do their part to proactively move implements to disperse traffic before areas become completely demolished. But, perhaps

more importantly, golfers must do their part and adhere to traffic-management policies. On several recent visits, it was evident that some golfers are actually trampling over stakes and cutting ropes.

There may be other stresses that cause turf to turn off-color when the temperatures decrease. I recently visited a club that had some blemishes that were recovering from grub damage in a few fairways. The superintendent suspected grubs may be an issue, so he applied an insecticide. Within minutes, grubs began to emerge from the soil and continued to emerge throughout the day. By the end of the day, it was evident that grubs were a major issue in these areas, as the ground was littered with grub carcasses.



*However, some recent blemishes may be caused by other stresses like grubs.*

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