



When It Gets Dry, Irrigation Water May Be In Short Supply

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It is dry in much of the Southeast, and the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) map indicates that dry conditions are intensifying and expanding. Unfortunately, many golf courses in the Southeast were not built to store large amounts of irrigation water because in most years there is ample natural rainfall. After all, irrigation is only a supplement to natural rainfall. However, when the weather is dry for several weeks or months, it is not uncommon to see irrigation ponds near empty. Fortunately, there is a simple strategy that can help golf courses manage a tight water supply.



Irrigation water supply is limited at many golf courses. Extending the irrigation interval helps stretch water supplies.

Lengthening the interval between irrigation events is the single most effective way to reduce total annual water use and extend a dwindling water supply. As the interval between irrigation events is extended, there is a greater probability that rainfall will disrupt the cycle. Rainfall replenishes soil moisture and resets the countdown to the next irrigation event. In

addition, surface runoff recharges

irrigation ponds. Over the course of a year, a golf course using this strategy will have fewer irrigation events and can save a considerable amount of water. On a large golf course, one irrigation event may require up to 1 million gallons of water. Eliminating even a few irrigation events could save millions of gallons of water with no significant change in turf health or playing quality.

If dry weather continues, there will be many discussions about water use on golf courses. Here are several resources that may be helpful:

[The USGA Water Resource Center](#) is a website dedicated to golf's use of water. Resources are available for superintendents, course officials and golfers

[Ten Things Every Golfer Should Know About Water Use on Golf Courses](#)

[Precision Turf Management and Water Use Efficiency](#)

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