



The Weather Is No Excuse

By Todd Lowe, agronomist, Southeast Region

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Golf course superintendents must contend with a host of variables on a daily basis. In addition to golfer demands and personnel and equipment issues, superintendents must also understand how turf responds to the weather. After all, turf is a collection of living plants that respond to the environment, either favorably or unfavorably.

For the most part, the Southeast Region has recently experienced good weather conditions. It is a far cry from the extended wet and cloudy conditions that were caused by a strong El Niño during winter 2015-2016.

However, the weather can suddenly change and superintendents must be prepared.



Fewer turfgrass issues occur during periods of moderate temperatures and sunlight.

Turf decline occurs from a host of stress factors, but weather is a key component in many cases. Sometimes, poor weather can cause catastrophic turf loss, as in the case of winter kill. Other times, extended periods of stressful weather cause gradual turf decline, as is commonly seen on bentgrass greens during hot and humid weather. Poor weather can also make turf vulnerable to other stresses like pests, traffic, shade and salts.

Some golfers may feel that poor weather is used as an excuse for subpar turf. However, everyone should remember that turf management and farming have more similarities than differences. When was the last time that a farmer was told that poor weather is just an excuse for crop decline?

Southeast Region Agronomists:

Steve Kammerer, regional director - skammerer@usga.org

Chris Hartwiger, director, USGA Course Consulting Service- chartwiger@usga.org

Patrick M O'Brien, agronomist - patobrien@usga.org

Todd Lowe, agronomist - tlowe@usga.org

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[Contact the Green Section Staff](#)