



Attendees at the 12th annual USGA Ultradwarf Surface Management Workshop benefited from educational sessions and field demonstrations.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2018 USGA ULTRADWARF SURFACE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

BY PATRICK O'BRIEN | AGRONOMIST, SOUTHEAST REGION

The 12th annual USGA Ultradwarf Bermudagrass Putting Green Surface Management Workshop was held at The Peninsula Club in Cornelius, North Carolina, and Rocky River Golf Club in Concord, North Carolina, July 30-31. Approximately 40 attendees were hosted by Jared Nemitz, superintendent of The Peninsula Club, and Scott McArthur, the superintendent at Rocky River. A great lineup of speakers was highlighted by Rodney Lingle, an agronomist and pioneer of modern ultradwarf bermudagrass putting green surface management practices based in Memphis, Tennessee.

The speakers shared the art and science of modern putting green management for ultradwarf putting surfaces. Demonstrations also gave attendees an up-close-and-personal view of ultradwarf surface management practices in action. One demonstration showcased a new five-plex mower that can cut labor hours in half when used for vertical mowing.

Several workshop attendees shared what they felt were the best take-home messages for their golf courses. Here is what they had to say:

- Topdress with the high-quality sand. Most of the particle sizes should be between 0.25 mm and 0.50 mm. Eliminating coarse particle sizes is important.
- Topdressing after backtrack vertical mowing incorporates sand into the turf canopy and reduces the damage sand does to mowers. Backtrack vertical mowing involves vertical mowing the green down grain and then turning around and vertical mowing the same line against the grain.
- Weekly backtrack vertical mowing – using a different direction each week – improves putting green quality.
- Backtrack vertical mowing is not a thatch removal process as the blades are typically set no deeper than 0.070 inch below the roller. The goal is to cut the bermudagrass stolons. The ideal setting is 0.065 to 0.070 inch during the growing season.
- Use only thin vertical mowing blades spaced 0.5 inch apart. Avoid using carbide-tipped blades.
- Install mowing reels with the highest number of blades you can get for your mowers. This allows the same playing conditions to be delivered at higher heights of cut, promoting healthier root systems and a higher-quality putting surface.
- Plant growth regulators can help produce consistently high-quality putting greens throughout the year. Using growth regulators during the winter months can help limit winter disease issues and produce healthier turf the following spring.
- Watch out for wear on the cleanup pass and skip various surface management procedures as necessary.
- Triplex units are very effective for mowing ultradwarf putting greens and are essential at many courses because of their efficiency. Triplex mowers can deliver the same quality of cut to walk-behind mowers and they speed up the mowing process, which is especially valuable when double mowing.
- The amount of labor required for ultradwarf bermudagrass putting surface management can be tailored to match the resources and needs of each facility. Tasks can be performed all at once for immediate results or they can be spread over the course of a week to reduce the impact on staff time. No matter your labor resources, you can still have very good ultradwarf putting greens by following the principles taught at the workshop.
- Devising a plan and sticking to a schedule is the key to a good surface management program. Stay ahead of potential issues to optimize success.

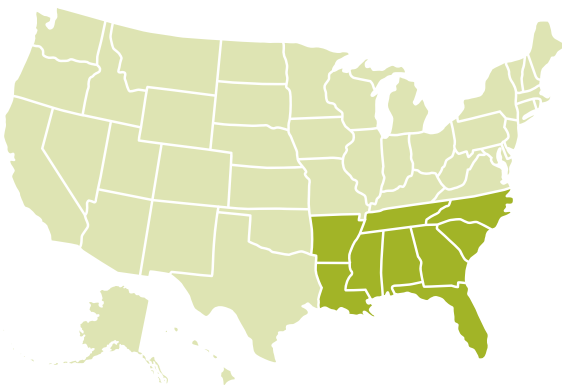


For information
on the USGA's Course
Consulting Service
Contact the Green
Section Staff.

[Learn More](#)

- All the practices demonstrated are golfer-friendly – i.e., play can proceed as normal when they have been completed.

A successful surface management program for ultradwarf putting greens can produce spectacular results for golfers and help a golf course's bottom line by delivering high-quality putting surfaces. Those who attended this workshop went home with valuable information and developed a network of contacts in this emerging field. Please contact a [USGA Agronomist](#) for more information on putting green surface management practices or for information regarding next year's workshop.



SOUTHEAST REGION AGRONOMISTS:

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

Steve Kammerer, Regional Director, skammerer@usga.org

Patrick M. O'Brien, Agronomist, patobrien@usga.org

Addison Barden, Agronomist, abarden@usga.org

[Information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service](#)

[Contact the Green Section Staff](#)
