

Green Section Record

REGIONAL UPDATE

January 17, 2020



Surface runoff onto a putting green is a major contributor to turf decline and should be addressed with interceptor drains or swales that catch and divert water. (USGA/Matt Sullivan)

WILD WINTER WEATHER

BY ADDISON BARDEN | AGRONOMIST, SOUTHEAST REGION

Frequent rains in the Southeast are creating saturated soils that make it difficult to complete daily maintenance and special winter projects. Golf courses have reported that ill-timed weekend rain events have impacted golf rounds the most. The rains are keeping soils excessively wet, which is presenting poor course conditions for prolonged periods of time. Superintendents are also finding it difficult to apply preemergence herbicides and complete winter maintenance projects because of the wet conditions.

Fortunately, this weather presents opportunities for assessing and improving course drainage. A common observation in 2019 during wet periods was putting green turf thinning as a result of surface water flowing onto putting surfaces from surrounding areas. The best way to identify problem areas is to look at each green during a rain shower to see if any surrounding areas are diverting

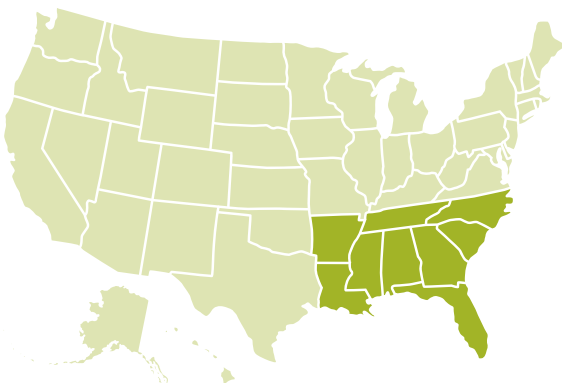


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surface water onto the putting surface. Once problem areas are identified, install interceptor drains, swales, or a combination of both to catch and divert water before it reaches the green.

If the current weather pattern has led to thin putting green turf at your course, conservative cultural practices should be immediately implemented. These practices include increasing the height of cut, decreasing mowing frequency, utilizing solid rollers, venting, and installing 2-inch plugs in damaged areas to prevent scalping. It is most efficient to perform these practices only in areas of thinning, but they should also be applied as a preventative measure to areas that are prone to thinning or show early signs of damage.



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