



## September Regional Roundtable, Part 2

By Chris Hartwiger, director, Course Consulting Service and  
Todd Lowe, agronomist, Southeast Region

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### *Three Things I Learned at the USGA Women's State Team Championship*

By Chris Hartwiger, director, Course Consulting Service



*Regularly collecting green speed information helps identify patterns among, aiding daily decisions about mowing and rolling practices.*

I had the privilege of serving as an agronomist at the 2015 USGA Women's State Team Championship at Dalhousie Golf Club in Cape Girardeau, Mo. Each day I took Stimpmeter readings and firmness measurements on the putting greens to aid daily maintenance and irrigation decisions. Below are three take-away points from spending eight days collecting and analyzing green speed and firmness.

- **Patterns Emerge** – After two or three days of data collection there were a few putting greens that always ranked as one of the firmest or fastest.
- **Most Greens Can Be Measured with the Stimpmeter** – One of the challenges on many golf courses is finding a relatively flat spot to take Stimpmeter readings. At Dalhousie Golf Club, I was able to find suitable spots for measuring green speeds on all eighteen putting greens. On four of the putting greens, I had to use the 2x notch on

the new USGA Stimpmeter. If you are not familiar with the new Stimpmeter, click here: [USGA Stimpmeter Information](#).

- Putting Green Dry Down – We had several moderate rainfall events during the week. As expected, firmness decreased after rain. Interestingly, there was little to no change in firmness for 24–36 hours after the rain despite dry and sunny conditions. Perhaps there was some capillary action taking place that keeps moisture content similar over this period. After 24–36 hours, there was an improvement in firmness.

While data collection is time consuming, it does provide valuable information about how two aspects of playing quality – green speed and firmness – vary from green to green and in different weather conditions.

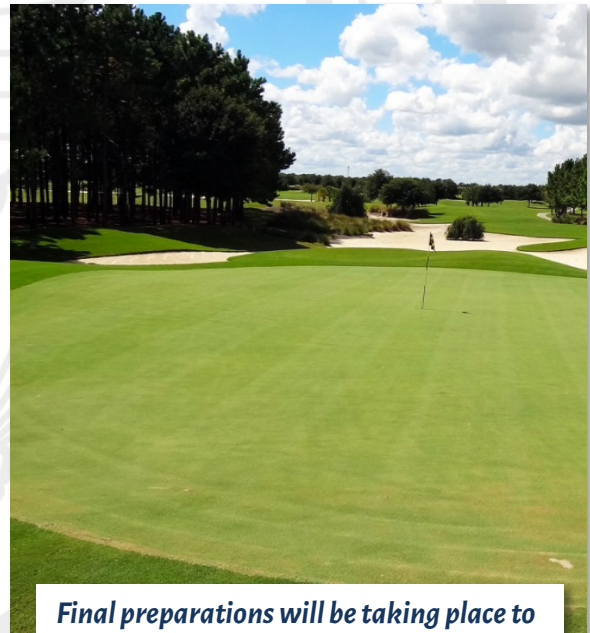
Congratulations to the team from Georgia on winning the championship and thanks to the team at Dalhousie Golf Club that spent untold hours making this championship a success.

### ***No Rest During Final Prep Weeks***

By Todd Lowe, agronomist, Southeast Region

Recent Course Consulting Service visits in Florida have been abuzz with activities as golf courses are preparing for the peak play season. Most facilities have performed their final cultivations for the summer and soon will be checking off a number of tasks including course-wide fertilization, landscape/tree pruning, mulching, edging and other detail work. Winter will be here soon enough and golf course managers are preparing accordingly.

Some areas have received a considerable amount of rain, making even menial



***Final preparations will be taking place to get golf courses looking good and playing great for the peak winter play season.***

tasks challenging. Mowing is difficult once the ground becomes saturated because mower tires can slip and create unsightly ruts, therefore some areas must be skipped. Fertilization has been postponed at several facilities so that the nutrients are retained within the soil and not leached away. Many herbicides are rain-safe within a few hours, but it can be a challenge to schedule chemical treatments amongst sporadic showers. As a result, off-color conditions and scalped turf have been observed on a few Course Consulting Service visits. This is only temporary and soon will improve with regular mowing and some needed fertilization.

Oddly enough, dry spots can be problematic on putting greens following extended rainfall. Many putting greens have sandy root zones that drain well. To make matters worse, putting greens have shallow roots during the summer months. The combination of a shallow root system and well-draining soil can cause drought stress on greens. It is important to be diligent and regularly monitor soil moisture to reduce the likelihood of turf thinning as we prepare for the upcoming winter play season.

**Southeast Region Agronomists:**

John H. Foy, regional director – [jfoy@usga.org](mailto:jfoy@usga.org)

Chris Hartwiger, director, USGA Course Consulting Service- [chartwiger@usga.org](mailto:chartwiger@usga.org)

Patrick M O'Brien, agronomist – [patobrien@usga.org](mailto:patobrien@usga.org)

Todd Lowe, agronomist – [tlowe@usga.org](mailto:tlowe@usga.org)

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