

## The Heat WAS On!

By Larry Gilhuly, agronomist, West Region

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The last update for the Northwest Region was posted the day before leaving for three straight USGA Championships at Murphy Creek Golf Course (CO) for the APL, The Broadmoor Golf Club (CO) for the Senior Open and finally Eugene Country Club (OR) for the Women's Amateur. In all three cases, the maintenance staffs provided superb fast, firm playing conditions under extremely hot and dry weather. While many stories could be told about each championship, perhaps the most unique occurred during the Senior Open at The Broadmoor and it is not about the wild bear that received ample viewing time on Sportscenter.



The last update talked about the damage that golf carts can cause during frost conditions and during the summer months when high temperatures combine with the lack of water to create drought conditions on fairways. But what happens when high temperatures and low humidity are combined with less nighttime irrigation to conduct a national championship?

Under conditions like these, forget about power carts - players, caddies, and their equipment can cause the same type of damage associated with power carts on greens if multiple hand watering is not conducted on a very frequent basis. Rather than boring you with the details, the photo says it all. The foot of a player or caddy happened to find a location that was suffering from moisture stress resulting in damage to the *Poa annua* and bentgrass leaves.

So what is the take home message of all of this? Actually, there are two. First, there is no question that power golf carts, maintenance equipment, and any heavy unit will cause damage to turf that is suffering from moisture stress. If a human foot will do it, there is no question about heavier units doing more damage. During these times heed the advice of restricting power golf carts to paths. Second, many claim that they want "championship" conditions on their golf course at all times. NO, YOU DON'T! This type of very labor intensive, hand watering works for short periods of time, but eventually the turf is placed under too much stress and will collapse in most climates. Besides, with the exception of the most accomplished players in the world, the skill level required to play this type of golf does not exist at your golf course except in some players' dreams!

Note: All three golf course superintendents (John Magnuson - Murphy Creek, Fred Dickman - The Broadmoor and Chris Gaughan - Eugene CC) and their maintenance staffs performed admirably in very difficult conditions to create superb playing conditions at these three championships. All three report that turf conditions have recovered!

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