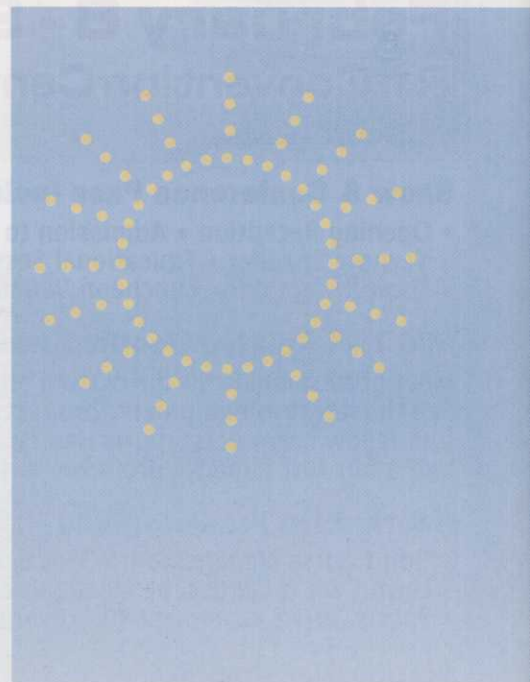
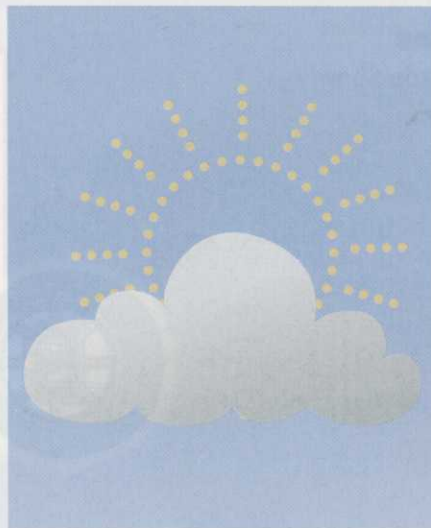


PAST

FUTURE



PRESENT



Mother Nature's Scorecard

The experts at WeatherBELL provide a sneak peak at 2012 climate trends.

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by Dave Smith

Weather is a major influence on golf course revenue. Advance weather warnings are crucial to prepare for these anomalies as you adjust your weather risk at your facility.

Before compiling a successful forecast, it is important to gain a perspective of the global weather trends that will impact U.S. conditions in the year to come.

We focus on past trends and other weather events to better predict future results. For instance, we are at the end of a two-year La Niña cycle and the U.S. is moving toward an El Niño cycle next winter.

Cold Pacific waters enhance Western U.S. precipitation. We will see a lot more La Niñas for the next decade due to the current cycle we are in, which could include more drought-like conditions in the Texas, Southern Plains and Southeast over the next five to 10 years.

Overall, the weather can be very similar to past years. Our current cycle is similar to what the nation experienced in the 1950s.

CURRENT CONDITIONS. As your operational plans are being made and changes are also implemented on weather and other issues, let's take a look at the current conditions as a starting point. Now we think there is going to be a major cold front that will move from Canada into the Northeast, and a Southeast U.S. ridge pattern of the second year of La Niña's for the rest of the winter. That means more cold and snow for the rest of the winter and, from a national perspective, February appears to get the most snow. But that means the analogs for the spring and summer can be looked at with the idea the La Niña is weakening, though not yet to the El Niño that we feel will show up next winter.

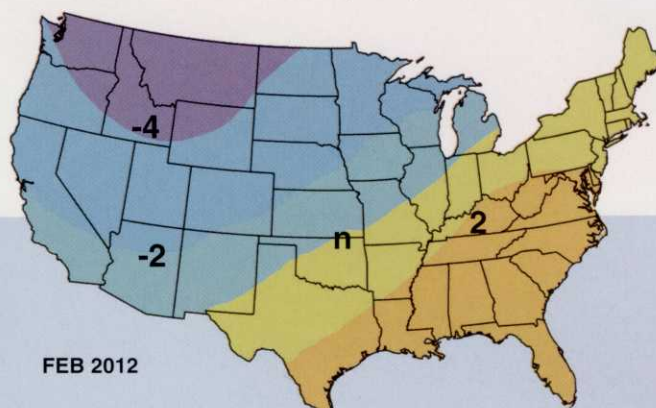
As we head to February and March, we see contradictions abounding. This is because we have a greater than normal num-

ber of influences on the weather. Some of the factors that we have to look at besides the obvious ones are not standard in the longer-term forecasting ideas. This has caused a very challenging period of forecasting due to so many moving parts. Thus, rapid drop offs in the ocean and above average surface temps have to have some kind of reaction that is more than normal. This is also why the temperature can be unseasonably warm, switch to a nasty cold front and warm up again. However, we have finally leveled off in these two areas and will lower the volatility. Our February and March temperature forecasts are still on target to validate and you can see them to the right.

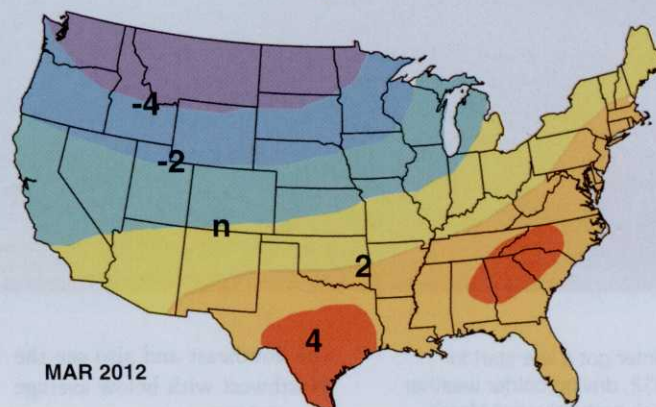
2012 FORECAST – AN EARLY LOOK. We need to look at the coming season by seeing the overall pattern and other influences to show you a complete view. First, how does the overall seasonal outlook appear from April through June? Temperatures overall for the three-month period will be at or below normal for about 70

WHAT'S ON THE WAY

The current La Niña cycle may be weakening, but weather will still be volatile across the country through the winter.



FEB 2012



MAR 2012

percent of the U.S. average. Some of the drying in the Southern Plains has gotten some needed rain since August but we have predicted that Texas should be dry for the next few months once again. Keep in mind we did mention in September that we see a trend of dryness in the South over the next few summers

so irrigation will be vital and the dry courses will not end this year. Precipitation compares to normal for the April to June time period. Current analysis shows the current weather trends are similar to the 1950s and the Northeast, Middle Plains and other pockets will see above normal rain but the dryness issue will extend to

“We will see a lot more La Niñas for the next decade due to the current cycle we are in, which could include more drought-like conditions in the Texas, Southern Plains and Southeast over the next five to 10 years.”



Winter got a late start for 2012, driving colder weather back probably until March or April. The shift in weather seems similar to the weather cycle recorded in the 1950s.

the Southeast and also see the Northwest with below average rain in 2012.

Overall, prepare for a cool spring. This year will see above normal rain, but less than last year and a cold April with winter trying to hang on late in the Great Lakes and Northern Plains especially. The precipitation analogs are starting another southern drought. This carries into the summer (June-August); and summer will be hot across the South. But this time, with the fade on the way and this being a second year Niña fade, the closest summer to this one for much of the nation's midsection is 2009. We will not have the heat as strong or as long as last summer, which by the way, did fade rapidly in August over the Midwest. Texas into the Carolinas are liable to be hot again.

You may wonder how the hurricane season may impact your courses. From a general overview we can point out some highlights. Storms and strong wind conditions have the greatest threat is near the East Coast for above normal impact. Note that when the Niña is weakening, the East Coast is a region to keep an eye on.

GOLF IMPACT. With Winter 2011-12 starting late and going from now and into March or April, we can look for the soil to be soggy and wet into April for some areas and then below-normal temperature can create the precipitation to stay on the ground later and may limit the early golf for some areas to get an early start.

But, we will be following these conditions over the next few months as it may impact the

ground conditions. And any drought will not see the same level as last year, but the Southeast and Carolinas should be closely followed and extreme weather will not be at the same levels as 2011. As mentioned above, each course reacts differently to weather. Our forecasts show below average rain should be better than 2011 and preparing now for these conditions will keep golf rounds going through June and late summer is when the drought conditions would really appear the most impactful but it is a little early to accurately forecast the late snow now. **GCI**

Dave Smith is an account executive with WeatherBELL Analytics and a frequent contributor to GCI.