

USGA

Winter Is Still Here — And It's June!

By: Pat Gross, Southwest Director, USGA Green Section

Everyone expected an unusual year with all the hype about El Niño. Well, it's June now and most areas of the Southwest are still experiencing winter conditions. Nobody is quite sure what to expect with summer just around the corner. The following are some notes and observations from around the Southwest during the past few months:

- Many courses report that annual rainfall is two to three times the normal average. This has definitely highlighted drainage concerns, and many courses are still dealing with seepage from hillsides, and springs surfacing in unusual areas.
- Heavy infestations of *Poa annua* have been observed on most courses, especially on fairways. Post emergence control with ethofumesate has been difficult on bermudagrass courses seed with perennial ryegrass because the Bermuda never went completely dormant this winter.
- Pink snow mold (*Microdochium nivale*) has been active on greens throughout the spring, even during the entire month of May. Normally, this disease disappears by March.
- *Poa annua* putting greens are generally puffy, requiring frequent vertical mowing and light sand topdressing to maintain smoothness.
- *Poa annua* seed heads on greens have persisted into May, which is two months longer than normally expected.
- Many courses had to cancel or delay deep tine aeration on greens because of the weather and excess saturation. This could cause problems during the summer for

those courses that count on deep tine aeration for drainage and to help leach soluble salts.

- Bermudagrass transition in the desert areas is lagging behind. Most of the desert courses have yet to see temperatures in the 100's to really stimulate active bermudagrass growth. Perennial ryegrass and *Poa trivialis* is still very strong and could possibly make it a bad year for transition.
- Despite the heavy rain, temperatures throughout the winter remained relatively mild with very few frosts. Some courses report that the non-overseeded bermudagrass never really went dormant.

There is some good news to report with all the heavy rain and cool temperatures this spring:

- So far there has been very little germination of crabgrass and goosegrass.
- Excess salts have been completely flushed out of the greens.
- The water reservoirs are full.
- The rains have helped to produce some thick, nasty rough for the U.S. Open at the Olympic Club in San Francisco!

The weather patterns this spring have definitely caused some unusual conditions. Hopefully, your courses are doing all right and are ready for a busy summer golf season. /

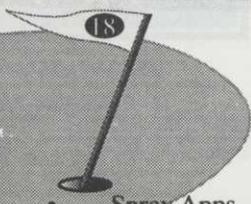
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