



*Many golf courses are operating with reduced staffing levels, which means playing conditions and presentation may not be at normal standards for a while.*

## TEMPER EXPECTATIONS

BY JOHN DANIELS | AGRONOMIST, CENTRAL REGION

Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois are some of the latest states to ease restrictions on playing golf. For many individuals, being out of the house and engaging in their favorite outdoor recreational activity is a welcome change from staying home all day.

It makes sense that the number of golf courses open for play continues to grow. The nature of the game and the expanses of greenspace on which it is played make it relatively easy to abide by social distancing recommendations. Policy changes instituted by golf course owners and operators to eliminate unnecessary interactions and touchpoints have also helped states loosen restrictions on golf. [Adjustments to the hole](#), removal of bunker rakes and walking-only policies are just a few examples of changes that golfers should be prepared for. What might come as a surprise, however, is the overall condition of the golf course they have been dreaming about playing.

Just because golf course maintenance operations were allowed to continue during a course closure does

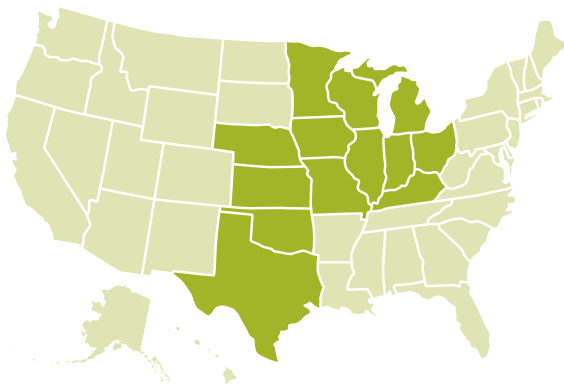
not mean that golfers should expect pristine playing conditions when play resumes. Sure, an extended period without play means less ball marks, divots and cart damage. However, it is also true that many golf course superintendents have had to overcome dramatic reductions in staffing and budgets during this same period. These reductions occurred at a point in the year when there is much to do and just keeping up with mowing can be a challenge. Therefore, conditions might not be as good as they normally are this time of year. It will take a little more time, and possibly additional support, to get things dialed-in so make sure your expectations are reasonable.

The good news is golf can be just as enjoyable without a perfectly manicured course.



For information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service Contact the Green Section Staff.

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