



Green Section Record

REGIONAL UPDATE

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Practices that promote fast putting green speeds can quickly lead to turf decline during the winter golfing season.

WHOA NELLY!

WINTER GOLF AND FAST GREENS DON'T MIX

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Cool winter weather that is so common in Florida and coastal areas of the Southeast slows bermudagrass growth considerably. Performing cultural practices that promote faster putting green speeds – such as lower mowing heights, double cutting and grooming – during winter months puts considerable stress on ultradwarf bermudagrass putting greens, which can quickly lead to turf decline.

Even if cultural practices to promote fast green speeds are performed for prolonged periods during somewhat favorable winter weather, turfgrass decline is likely to occur. The high play volume during these periods adds stress that is difficult to manage.

So, what can be done to maintain healthy turfgrass this winter season?

- Understand that the practices required to achieve fast green speeds do not



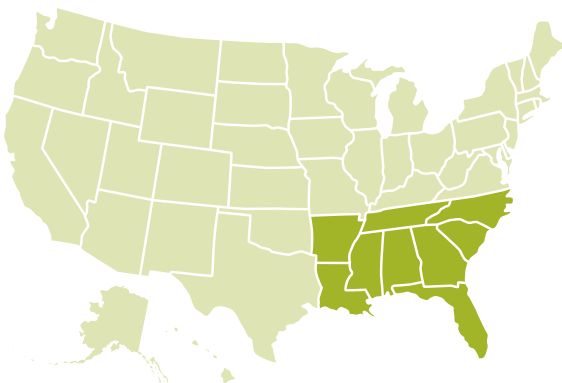
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sustain healthy turf.

- When in doubt, back off aggressive maintenance. Slower greens can be just as fun to play when hole locations are placed on steeper slopes.
- If practices are being performed to produce fast greens and cold weather arrives, the growth needed to slow the putting greens will not occur. This is why it's important to remain conservative.
- As long as weather is appropriate and putting green turf is healthy, short stints of cultural practices that increase green speeds are acceptable, but they shouldn't be performed under stressful conditions.
- The winter golf season is a marathon, not a sprint. Remember that compromising turf health for short-term benefits is not worth the long-term issues of turf decline and increased resource requirements.

If you have any questions regarding winter golf or course management topics, please [contact your regional USGA agronomist](#).



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