

Winter Wonderland Or Winter Woes?

By Larry Gilhuly, agronomist, West Region

February 3, 2017

It is the time of year when turfgrasses in both cold and warm climates take a hiatus from normal growth. However, golfers in all climates remain eager to get out and test their games to determine if they still have it. Unfortunately, it is also the time of year when colder temperatures produce snow and ice that causes many golf courses in northern climes or at higher elevations to close. In the milder parts of the Pacific Northwest and throughout the



During frozen conditions, golfer traffic can quickly wear out the turf around hole locations.

Southwest, cold temperatures often create frost. The conflict between this natural process and the desire of golfers to play often leads to contentious dialogue between those responsible for golf course maintenance and golfers. This update does not go into depth about why golfers should not be on a golf course when frost is present. Rather, it shows that the conflict between frosty conditions and golfers goes way back, as can be seen in the following articles describing this issue:

[Winter Covering and Use of Greens - 1922](#)

["Temporary Greens Today" or "Course Closed Until Further Notice" 1951](#)

[To Prevent Winter Damage - 1979](#)

[Playing Par with Jack Frost - 1984](#)

[Importance of Letting Frost Melt Before Play - 2005](#)

[Fore The Golfer: Frost Delays and Turfgrass Health - 2013](#)

Remember, as temperatures warm and frost goes away, then it becomes the time to go out and play.

West Region Agronomists:

Patrick J. Gross, regional director – pgross@usga.org

Larry W. Gilhuly, agronomist – lgilhuly@usga.org

Brian S. Whitlark, agronomist – bwhitlark@usga.org

Blake Meentemeyer, agronomist – bmeentemeyer@usga.org

[Information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service](#)

[Contact the Green Section Staff](#)