

Green Section Record

REGIONAL UPDATE

March 20, 2020



Trim or remove overgrown vegetation adjacent to primary playing areas to improve visibility, increase air flow and speed pace of play.

MADNESS IN MARCH

BY BRIAN WHITLARK | AGRONOMIST, WEST REGION

March is typically the highest revenue month for courses in the southern portion of the West Region, but with the COVID-19 pandemic, rounds are down and corporate outings are being shuttered. While this is not the case for all courses, many have reported a significant reduction in rounds. With less play, course maintenance operations can use this time as an opportunity to conduct important cultural practices and clean out-of-play areas with greater efficiency.

Here are a few ideas shared during recent course visits to consider over the next month with less play volume:

- Overseeded courses can take this opportunity to drop mowing heights, conduct vertical mowing and experiment with “transition” herbicides. For



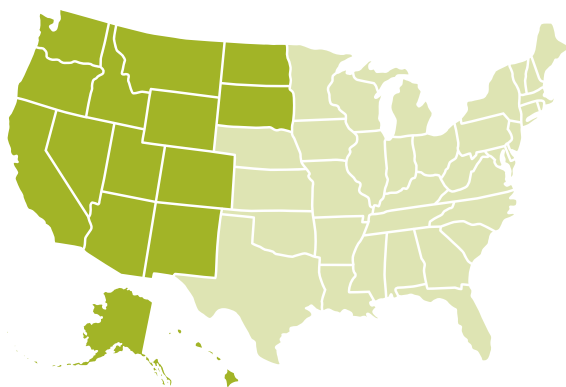
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example, select one or two herbicides – such as penoxulam, pinoxaden or foramsulfuron – and apply them at very low rates over multiple applications to slowly shift the competitive advantage to the understory bermudagrass. A few courses are planning to use penoxulam at 4-5 ounces per acre or only 0.5 ounces per acre of pinoxaden.

- Conduct small-diameter aeration or slicing operations on all primary turf areas. These operations can be time consuming and difficult to complete with a full tee sheet.
- Apply sand topdressing to greens, tees, approaches and fairways.
- Many courses have out-of-play areas with overgrown, dense vegetation. Use this opportunity to trim, prune and remove dense vegetation – especially within 10-15 feet of primary playing areas. Once play volumes increase, players will be able locate their errant golf shots and find their way back to turf, speeding up play.
- Freshen-up course accessories such as flagsticks, flags, hole liners and tee markers. Bringing some accessories in for maintenance will also reduce the number of touchpoints on the course.
- Raise and level sprinklers. This is a time-consuming task – often 45-60 minutes per sprinkler – that can be difficult to complete during normal play. With fewer golfers on the course, this task can be completed more efficiently and with greater safety.

The month of March will be tough without March Madness basketball and other sports, but hopefully golfers will find a haven in the outdoors on a golf course. Is there a better place to be during this time of social distancing? Best wishes to all during this difficult time and please do not hesitate to contact your [regional USGA agronomist](#) for more information on these strategies or any other agronomic practices.



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