

Username: Register for the site:
I am a GCSAA Member
I am not a MemberPassword: Keep me logged in [I forgot my password »](#)

ABOUT US JOIN CHAPTERS STUDENTS INDUSTRY CLIENTS CONTACT US HELP

HOME



07/22/2010

NEWS

News Releases

Tournament Fact Sheets

GCSAA Publications

Leadership Surveys

Articles For Reprint

Downloadable Logos

Board and CEO Photos

Contact Us

JOBS

EDUCATION

ADVOCACY

MY COMMUNITY

SOLUTIONS/TOOLS

FORUMS

STORE

OUR PARTNERS

Superintendents, facilities pulling out all stops to address the challenge Heat wreaking havoc on golf courses nationwide

Prolonged periods of high temperatures, and in some cases, excessive rainfall, and high humidity have made life uncomfortable for golfers and golf courses alike, with Mother Nature holding all the cards for true relief.

"The simple fact is the cool-season turfgrasses such as bentgrass, fescue, bluegrass, annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) and others are stressed when temperatures climb and humidity is high," Clark Throssell, Ph.D., director of research for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, said. "Golf courses in many parts of the country experience this every year, however what makes the situation so dire this year are the high levels of extended heat and humidity, and the sizeable part of the country affected (Midwest, Mideast, Northeast and Mid-Atlantic)."

According to Throssell, golf facilities and those entrusted with managing the golf course – golf course superintendents – are not alone in this battle with the elements. However, the nature of their product makes their challenge greater.

"We are certainly seeing homeowners, athletic fields and businesses suffer turfgrass damage brought on by the conditions," Throssell said. "What makes it more difficult for golf facilities are the mowing heights are much lower and traffic is much heavier. That just adds to the stress on the turfgrass."

Throssell indicates that golf course superintendents are addressing the issue with a variety of management practices to make sure turfgrass survives. While there may be some short-term impact on playability of the course, the alternative is the loss of grass, the closure of the course and the additional costs of re-establishing playing surfaces (primarily putting greens).

He also cautioned golfers from thinking that water, whether from rain or irrigation, is the answer to the ills. There is a difference between heat stress and drought stress. Adequate irrigation will alleviate drought stress. Adequate irrigation will not alleviate heat stress. It is not only possible, but likely, for a turfgrass plant to be adequately watered and still suffer from heat stress under extended periods of high temperatures.

Among the practices that superintendents are implementing to manage golf courses include:

- Raising the mowing heights of playing areas, most notably putting greens.
- Alternating daily practices of mowing and rolling putting greens, with consideration to skipping a day if the schedule of play allows.
- Forgoing double mowing, topdressing, verticutting or grooming greens.
- Watering to provide adequate soil moisture, but not over watering as saturated soil will cause the turfgrass to decline rapidly.
- Hand watering as much as feasible. If a green has a dry spot or two, superintendents will hand water the dry spots only and will not water the entire green. When the entire green shows stress from a lack of water, superintendents use the overhead sprinklers and water the entire green.
- Avoid aerifying using large diameter tines that penetrate deeply into soil and remove a core of soil. If a superintendent feels the putting surface is sealed, venting using small diameter solid tines or other similar technique is employed.
- If fertilizer is required, small amounts of fertilizer are applied via a sprayer and observation of the response occurs before fertilizing again.
- Monitoring and adjusting golf car traffic patterns to minimize stress to turf.

Throssell indicated that during periods such as this, it becomes easy to compare golf course conditions and pressure decision makers into actions that might prove detrimental to the long term health of the playing surface.

"Communication is vital," Throssell said. "Superintendents, golf professionals, owners, managers and others must be in constant contact with golfers to educate them on what is happening at the facility. But golfers must also understand that golf courses are like snowflakes – no two are alike. Some courses may be able to withstand the challenges of Mother Nature better than others because of better drainage and soil conditions, better air flow due to the placement of trees, less traffic or the presence of greater financial resources.

"We know the weather conditions will become more agreeable. What is important right now is to manage the golf course in a manner so that turf can be kept alive until that point."

GCSAA is a leading golf organization and has as its focus golf course management. Since 1926, GCSAA has been the top professional association for the men and women who manage golf courses in the United States and worldwide. From its headquarters in Lawrence, Kan., the association provides education, information and representation to more than 20,000 members in more than 72 countries. GCSAA's mission is to serve its members, advance their profession and enhance the enjoyment, growth and vitality of the game of golf. The association's philanthropic organization, [The Environmental Institute for Golf](#), works to strengthen the compatibility of golf with the natural environment through research grants, support for education programs and outreach efforts. Visit GCSAA at www.gcsaa.org.

For more information contact:

Clark Throssell, Ph.D., GCSAA director of research, 800-472-7878

GOLF INDUSTRY SHOW THE ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTE FOR GOLF IAGA GOLFERS GOLF INDUSTRY TRAVEL

© 1996-2010 GCSAA | [PRIVACY POLICY](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [SITE MAP](#) | [RSS Feeds](#)

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America is dedicated to serving its members, advancing their profession, and enhancing the enjoyment, growth and vitality of the game of golf.
Golf Course Superintendents Association of America
1421 Research Park Drive