



## WINTER PLAY - WHEN TO GO AND WHEN TO SAY NO

By **Chris Hartwiger**, director, USGA Course Consulting Service and **Adam Moeller**, agronomist, Northeast Region

Applying the principles of turf science to common winter scenarios that arise on golf courses allows decision-makers to implement preventative measures, assess risk, and make informed decisions that provide an appropriate balance between the needs of the turf and the expectations of golfers.



In some areas, snow and ice cover on putting greens can provide insulation to turf from direct low-temperature injury.

Golfers are always anxious to get onto the course and thus cannot help but be disappointed when they hear the words "frost delay," "frozen greens" or "cart path only." Unfortunately, golfers who enjoy playing year-round inevitably will encounter periods where limiting access to the golf course is necessary.

Despite the desire of golf course operators to satisfy their customers and succeed in the golf business, decision-makers at golf facilities must understand that there are a variety of agronomic factors in play during the winter months that may require limiting access to the golf course. At the crux of winter issues are questions that every golf course decision-maker must answer. How will turf that is slowly growing or not growing at all respond to play on a particular day? Will traffic from golfers result in short- or long-term harm to the turf that could affect course conditions in the spring and summer? Is the cost of repairing some damage less than the loss of revenue that occurs when access to the course is limited?

This article describes the environmental conditions and characteristics of cool- and warm-season turf that make them vulnerable to winter injury. The most common issues regarding winter play are identified, and guidance is provided, to aid in the decision-making process.

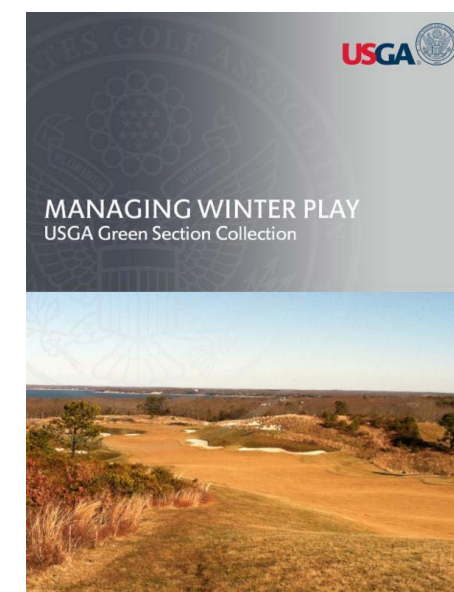
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## DIGITAL COLLECTION - MANAGING WINTER PLAY

We are excited to add a new feature to the Green Section Record in 2015. Each issue of the Green Section Record now will include an interactive collection of supporting materials. In addition to the monthly major article, each compendium will include supporting articles, and a photo gallery and videos that provide additional, relevant information on the subject. The collections can be viewed online in a user-friendly digital magazine format, saved as a PDF or printed. We hope you find this new feature to be an extremely useful resource.

[View The "Managing Winter Play" Collection Now](#)



### FOR THE GOLFER

"WHY CAN'T WE TEE OFF NOW?"

OUR EXPERTS EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF MANAGING WINTER PLAY AND HOW IT CAN AFFECT GOLFERS

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## REGIONAL UPDATES

The USGA Green Section is divided into four regions staffed by agronomists who work with golf facilities on care of the golf course. USGA agronomists provide regular regional updates outlining current issues and observations from the field. Be sure to view updates from multiple regions as featured ideas, techniques and solutions to problems often apply to other parts of the country.



### NORTHEAST REGION

Winter in the Northeast is seldom easy and never predictable. If recent winter weather has left your playing surfaces covered in slush or ice, this week's regional update will help you assess the risk for winter injury. It also provides information on upcoming educational conferences where you can learn more.

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### SOUTHEAST REGION

As we ring in the new year, the USGA agronomists from the Southeast Region share some of their most prominent agronomic memories from 2014 and some upcoming educational opportunities that can help prepare you for a successful 2015.

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### WEST REGION

With a new year underway, we all have resolutions we wish to achieve in 2015. For better putting green smoothness and improved turf quality, consider adopting some of the resolutions presented in this regional update.

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### CENTRAL REGION

Water conservation plays an integral role in the sustainability of golf facilities and, with a greater awareness of golf course water use, the importance of a water conservation plan is superlative. Learn why developing a water conservation plan makes an excellent New Year's resolution for your golf facility.

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