



# GREEN SECTION RECORD

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## EXPERIENCE THE U.S. OPEN LIKE NEVER BEFORE USGA AGRONOMISTS TAKE YOU BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE U.S. OPEN

Ever wonder what goes into preparing a course for golf's biggest stage? Join us behind the scenes at Merion Golf Club through a compilation of photos captured by USGA agronomists during course preparations and daily setup for the U.S. Open. Golfers and turf professionals alike will be amazed at the enormity of the event and gain insight into getting the course ready to host the national championship. See everything from the challenges of overcoming weather to the tools and techniques used by USGA and Merion Golf Club staff to prepare the grounds. Additional photos will be added throughout the Open so be sure to revisit these links occasionally.

[View The Album](#)

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### FROM THE US OPEN

## GREEN PRACTICES MAKE PERFECT SENSE AT MERION



Through his educational outreach, Merion director of golf course operations Matt Shaffer brings a new perspective to the club's membership on the subject of environmental sustainability. Merion will host the 2013 U.S. Open in June. (Copyright USGA/Jonathan Kolbe)

As Matt Shaffer stood on the fescue-covered "green" roof of the Merion Golf Club maintenance facility, he was asked if he ever monitored the comings and goings of his staff from that vantage point.

Shaffer has directed the golf course operations on the East Course at Merion – site of the 2013 U.S. Open in June – for the past 11 years. In that time, nearly a dozen

of his assistants have gone on to lead course operations at some of the country's most renowned clubs, such as Somerset Hills Country Club in Bernardville, N.J., and Shoreacres in Lake Bluff, Ill.

Shaffer's educational outreach also includes bringing a new perspective to the membership at Merion, which increasingly appreciates and understands the need for more environmentally aware practices on its two 18-hole courses.

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### THE HIGH LEVEL OF TURF MAINTENANCE REQUIRED TO CONDUCT A USGA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP MAY SURPRISE YOU

## COURSE PREPARATION FOR A USGA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP — WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS?



Course setup begins from the first and tenth tees at first light during practice rounds through the first few days of the competition. Setup crews proceed from tee to green on every golf hole.

Golfers raved about course conditions after the recent club championship. The greens were smooth; slick as ice. And how about those impossible "never been there before" hole locations? Fairway striping patterns rivaled the intricate mowing patterns of the Major League Baseball All-Star Game. Bunkers have never been firmer or more consistent. Perhaps you hear the ultimate compliment in the clubhouse... "we could have hosted the U.S. Open today."

Assume the playing surfaces could indeed challenge the cream of the world's professional and amateur golfers. Could you sustain this high level of course conditioning throughout an entire week of competition? Before answering, let's discuss the scope of maintenance practices associated with hosting a typical national championship. To put it another way, just what is so special about course conditioning for a USGA national championship and why?

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### SO YOU THINK YOU WANT TO PLAY CHAMPIONSHIP CONDITIONS ALL THE TIME?

## WHY WE CAN'T AND, PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANT, WHY WE SHOULDN'T



Daily tasks are accelerated for championship events by adding additional staff for each area of the course.

Golfer education is more important today than ever. Golf courses everywhere are facing decreasing budgets and increased scrutiny of product use and water management. Superintendents and course officials are obligated to work within the variable parameters of nature and increased legislation. Allied golf associations need to help golfers understand the amazing commitment of time and resources it takes to provide

championship conditions. Numerous factors need to be considered before a course even starts down the "championship conditions" road.

We all love what we see on television. It is important for golfers to realize that for most championship events, a year or more of preparation has been devoted solely for that four or five-day period, for one week in a given year. The playing and, more important, the maintaining of championship conditions is much more difficult than it looks. It is hard on a course's wallet, and it can be even harder on golfers' egos.

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## REGIONAL UPDATES



### MID-ATLANTIC

Rain continues to saturate the Mid-Atlantic Region, which means now is not the time to push for fast green speeds. Plus, see maintenance photos from the U.S. Open at Merion Golf Club.

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### SOUTHEAST

Do you know how much your bunkers cost to maintain? Find out using this simple worksheet.

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### NORTH-CENTRAL

Keep mowers sharp and properly adjusted so they are at their best. The grass is growing rapidly and mowing is required at its highest frequency of the year.

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### NORTHEAST

Never let a heavy rain go to waste. An extended wet period in the Northeast makes for saturated course conditions, but don't miss your chance to explain problem areas to golfers or identify areas in need of better drainage.

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### FLORIDA

Golf facilities in Florida are busy cleaning up from Tropical Storm Andrea and dealing with wet, saturated conditions.

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### SOUTHWEST

Learn how glyphosate damage to turf in February teaches us a valuable lesson when overseeding bermudagrass.

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### NORTHWEST

Collar dams weaken the turf and compromise playability. Read on to learn about two common methods being used at golf facilities to eliminate the problem.

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### MID-CONTINENT

USGA agronomists conduct a simulated Turf Advisory Service (TAS) visit to the golf course and its maintenance facility for CMAA members.

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## FORWARD TO A FRIEND

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