



Buckeye Golf Association

newsflash

buckeyegolf.com

January 2019

Support our Corporate Members:
They support you.

Aqua Doc Lake & Pond Mgt
Shawn Spence aquadocinc@aol.com

Baker Vehicle Systems
Rick Baker Rick.baker@bakervehicle.com

Columbus Turf & Nursery
Daniel Huggett colturf@columbus-turf.com

Corporate Tax Resources
Fred Mawson fmawson@ctrtax.com

Course & Club Golf Outfitters
Michael Grabeman mandsres@aol.com

DryJect
Jeff Broadbell jeff@dryject.com

Employers Choice Plus
Kelly Pavloff kp@echoiceplus.com

Froggy's Ball Service
Al Kidder froggyak@aol.com

Global Turf Equipment
Debbie Nipper
debbie@globalturfequipment.com

International Club Supplies
Jill Wilde jwilde@intlclubsuppliers.co

Jet Pay
Hugh McDonald hmcdonald@jetpay.com

Keystone
**The preferred insurance supplier
of the Buckeye Golf Association**
Lori Simpson lsimpson@keystoneinsgrp.com

Pro/Angle Bunker Sand
Eric Ludewig eludewig@rwsidley.com

Saling Simms Associates
Jenny Berry
Jenn.berry@raymondjames.com

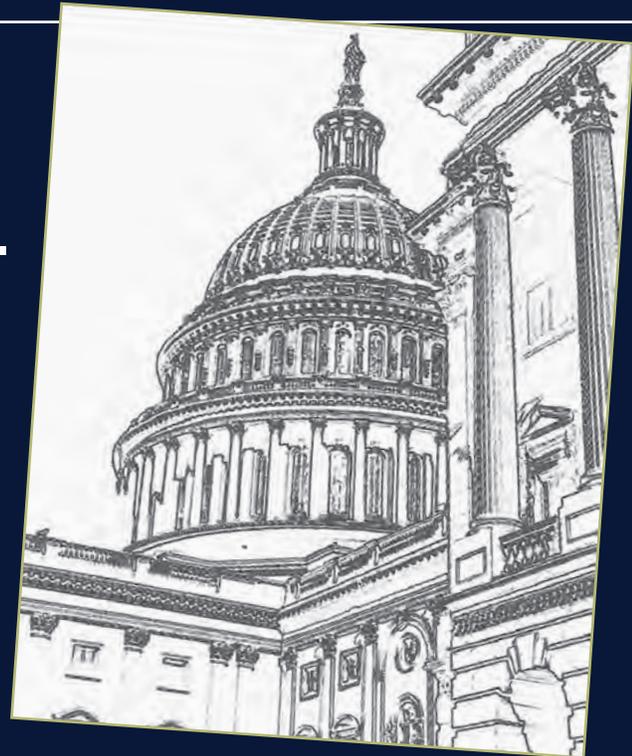
South East Golf Car
John McNutt/Dave Tribby
Segc100@aol.com

Teesnap
Ed Baker Ed.baker@teesnap.com

VGM
Keaton Juergens Keaton.juergens@vgm.com

Wolf Creek Company
Alan Clark aclark@wolfcreekcompany.com

JUST ARRIVED – 2019 Federal and State Labor Posters.



This is another BGA member benefit (\$69 value).

To get your copy, email

KenG@buckeyegolf.com

Membership pays.



P.O. Box 42
Delaware, OH 43015

614-563-5551
Fax: 866-594-0823

KenG@buckeyegolf.com
buckeyegolf.com

Association Officers

PRESIDENT | Rick Snode, Tannenhau Golf Club | **VICE PRESIDENT** | Bill Fitch, Bob O Link Golf Course
TREASURER | Tom Holtsberry, Colonial Golfers Club

Board of Directors

Roy Clark, Liberty Hills Golf Club | Rich Kitchen, Locust Hills Golf Club | John Whittle, Thorn Apple Country Club
Rich Alden, Painesville Country Club | Tom Holtsberry, Colonial Golfers Club | Dan Sutter, Loyal Oak Golf Course
Brian Bridges, Chapel Hill Golf Club | Trent Sheridan, Pine Hill Golf Course



Weather to Play

Golf Course Operators Lament Weather Impact on 2018 Rounds-Played

Written by Tom Mackin | January 2019

Last year's weather picture was not a pretty one. Above average rainfall in the Midwest and Northeast. Wildfires in the West. Volcanic explosions in Hawaii. Record rainfall totals in Florida, which in May experienced an unprecedented soaking that surpassed the golf-rich state's previous high-water mark in 1895.

Rounds of golf in the U.S. were down, year-over-year, in 10 of the first 11 months in 2018, affected in large part by colder weather and heavier precipitation than normal during the busiest months for golf. April typically signifies the start of the golf season in many regions, and national rounds that month were off 13.5% from a year earlier as unusually cold temperatures delayed the start of spring. September, which is the last hurrah of summer and the start of the fall golf season in some regions, was down 7.2% because of significant precipitation increases. November saw the biggest year-over-year decrease in national rounds-played (-18.8%) of any month dating back to 2013.

ClubCorp CEO David Pillsbury, who leads the biggest operator of private clubs in the U.S., acknowledged just how tough last year was in terms of weather.

"We had around 55 more rain days or weather-impacted play days in 2018 than we had in 2017," he said. "That's almost two months more of poor weather. '18 was one of the most difficult years I've seen in 30 years." Perhaps ominously, Pillsbury is also looking ahead at the possibility of 2019 being an El Nino year, which could potentially mean more extreme-weather events.

It was rain that caused the most headaches for E.J. Altobello, Director of Golf at Tekoa Country Club in Westfield, Massachusetts, 10 miles west of Springfield.

"We got off to a decent start in May and June, and July was warm but dry. Then in late July we started getting a ton of rain along with some heat, which really impacted us negatively as far as rounds played," said Altobello, whose course averages about 29,000 rounds annually. "We're going to be 3-4 percent down in rounds played from 2018 to 2017."

Altobello said 20 entire days were lost to rain, double the average in a normal season, which lasts from April 1 to December 15.

"It was the third or fourth wettest summer since records have been kept," he said. "It's one of the most challenging summers a lot of us have seen up in this region." Poor weather forced the rescheduling of many charity events, as the course hosts up to 80 annually. "People are committed to playing in those events and we didn't lose any of them. So those helped us fare better than most."

Weather to Play... continued

At Oxford Greens in Oxford, Connecticut, Superintendent Bryan Barrington and his team also had their hands full with rain.

"Of 218 available days for play this season, we had 88 with some amount of rain and 22 were complete washouts," he said. "That's a new record for us, and 20 more days of precipitation than in 2017. We even had the second-wettest November on record."

The only silver lining was a dramatic decrease in water usage.

"From July 20 to Labor Day, on an average year since 2003, my water usage is around six million gallons," said Barrington, who helped open Oxford Greens in 2004. "In that same time this year, it was 350,000 gallons. That's pretty significant. In a normal year our overall use is between 15 and 17 million gallons. This year it's about 11 million gallons and change."

John Foster, the General Manager of the University of Notre Dame's Warren Golf Course in South Bend, Indiana, said 2018 brought the worst weather he's seen in his 17 years at the school.

"Normally our season starts the last week of March, but that month and April were horrible, as was the first half of May," he said. "Summer was not bad for us from a rounds-played standpoint. But my superintendent (Matt Cielen) would have a different story. There were very trying conditions from a turf management standpoint in July and August. Kudos to Matt – golfers didn't know he and his team were dragging hoses around until dark every night spot watering by hand."

Business was fantastic in September thanks to four home football games for Notre Dame, but October was the worst one ever in Foster's memory.

"It was an average of 10 to 12 degrees below normal every day," Foster said. "We had 50 percent of our normal play that month. And October is a really big month for us because of all the activities around football season. That really hurt us. We normally get a few flurries in late October, but this year we had quite a bit. Even in November, we get 10 days when people could play, but this year we had nothing. It was just a short season."

Foster said it was a "weird year," but says he isn't sure what normal is anymore when it comes to the weather.

"If it's not too dry, it's too wet. If it's not too hot, it's too cold. The past seven or eight years we have not had what one would call a normal golf season from a weather standpoint," he said. "I don't know if it's global warming or what, but our weather patterns are just totally different than what one would think would be normal. It's unpredictable."

Foster desperately hopes that's not the case this summer, when the course hosts the 2019 U.S. Senior Open (June 27-30).

"I'm going to jinx myself but, according to records going back 50 years, that week is the driest week of the whole year. From a temperature standpoint it's an average of 80 degrees. If we could have chosen a week that should be ideal for the championship, that's the one. But I probably should keep my mouth shut about that."

Even in the Southwest, where sunshine is usually predominant year-round, stormy weather made an impact. On October 2nd, heavy rains caused major flooding that invaded the facilities at Ak-Chin Southern Dunes in Maricopa, Arizona, 20 miles south of Phoenix.

"We took on 3.96 inches of rain in under 24 hours," said General Manager Brady Wilson. "That's normally our total annual amount of rain. It was a 250-year rain event unlike anything we've ever seen before."

The timing wasn't as bad as it could have been though, according to Wilson. "The course was scheduled to close on October 15th for the annual two-week overseeding process. So, overall, we lost 13 days of revenue. During that timeframe in 2017, we had 1,600 rounds played. In October we had 30."

Kris Strauss, the Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Troon Golf — the biggest third-party management company in the industry — said weather negatively impacted rounds-played at Troon properties in certain pockets of the U.S., such as the Eastern seaboard and Hawaii. Troon-managed courses in Hawaii also fell victim to volcanic eruptions on the Big Island that resulted in declines in hotel occupancy and thus golf occupancy, and saw the threat of hurricanes Olivia and Lane affect playable days.

"Thankfully, the volcanic eruption stopped and business is back to normal," Strauss said, noting that Hawaii avoided further damage when the two hurricanes skirted the islands. "Year-end results look strong, so it's great to have those weather events in our rear-view mirror."

For Troon, the decline in rounds-played in particular markets was negated by the ability to drive rate – and thus recapture lost revenue – during periods of time with more favorable weather. "As such, many of our clients are realizing solid years financially," Strauss said, adding that strong markets include Arizona (both in rounds and rate growth) and California (rate growth).

Through November, the total number of rounds-played at golf courses across the U.S. was down 4.7% from the previous year. Typically, the weather accounts for an annual fluctuation of approximately 2% to 3% either way. Based on the 456 million rounds-played in 2017, the year-end figure for 2018 projects to be around 435 million.

Update Your Hours



While you're likely in your off season, make sure that your website and Facebook page is providing accurate information. Login and update your hours of operation within your Facebook Page and in your Google Business account. To adjust your operation times on Google, you need to login to business.google.com to manage your Google account. It's a good idea to put a reminder in your calendar to do this every month, so your hours are always accurate. Google and Facebook are the modern era yellow book. That's where your customers are going to find out vital information about your business.

This is important because when visitors are looking for your golf course, they are likely going to use Google maps or another navigation source to get there. If your hours of operation aren't posting accurately, Google maps will tell the user that you're closed! Take five minutes to update your hours, so you're providing good information to your customers.

Allison George

Wizard of Fun
Toad Valley Golf Course
237 NE 80th Street
Pleasant Hill, IA 50327

office - 515.967.9575
mobile - 515.559.3998
www.toadvalley.com



Tax Time is Fast Approaching

This tax season is going to be interesting. A number of significant changes have been created for this tax season as a result of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. I'm not really sure who the winners or losers will be, but expecting most taxpayers to realize at least a small advantage over past years. Anyway, this tax year will begin to create a new normal.

I've talked about this before, but the IRS continues to find new ways to penalize us tax payers. I have seen recent letters from the IRS charging penalties for quarterly estimates not paid until the end of the year - from tax years long ago.

Individual Tax	Current Law	New Law
Tax Rates - Ordinary Income	7 brackets with a top rate of 39.6%	7 brackets with a top rate of 37%
Tax Rates - Capital Gains	3 brackets with top rate of 20%	3 brackets with top rate of 20%
Personal Exemptions	\$4,000 per person, before phase outs	Repealed
Standard Deduction (Single/Joint)	\$6,350/\$12,700	\$12,000/\$24,000
Itemized Deductions for:		
• Medical Expenses	Allowed, if over 7.5% of AGI	Allowed, if over 7.5% of AGI
• State and Local Taxes	Allowed	Limited to \$10,000
• Mortgage Interest on Acquisition Debt	Allowed on first \$1,000,000 of debt	Allowed on first \$750,000 of debt
• Mortgage Interest on HELOC	Allowed on first \$100,000 of debt	Not allowed
• Charitable Contributions	Allowed, within limits	Allowed, increased limits
Deduction for Alimony	Allowed	Not allowed for divorce agreements entered into after 12/31/2018
Deduction for Interest on Student Loans	Allowed	Allowed
Income From Passthroughs (Partnerships and S Corps)	Taxed ordinary income rates	Deduction equal to 20% of certain types of business income, with limitations related to wages paid and capital invested
Net Investment Income Tax	3.8% tax rate	3.8% tax rate
Additional Medicare Tax	.9% tax on wages or SE income over \$200,000	.9% tax on wages or SE income over \$200,000
Alternative Minimum Tax	In effect	Retained, but scaled back