



Cleveland Golf Club – Winter Frost Policy

Purpose

This policy explains why and when frost greens are used during the winter months, outlines how decisions are made, and clarifies how communication will be managed.

The goal is to protect the playing surfaces and ensure fairness and transparency for all members, while maintaining the long-term health of the golf course.

1. Background

Frost occurs when moisture in or on turfgrass freezes. When golfers walk or play on frozen turf, the ice crystals within the grass blades rupture, causing lasting damage to the leaf tissue and root structure.

Both the United States Golf Association (USGA) and The R&A advise that play on frozen or frosted putting surfaces should be strictly avoided to prevent significant turf injury that can persist well into the growing season.

USGA Guidance:

> “Walking or playing on frost-covered turf causes the same type of injury as traffic on frozen ground—plants are crushed and ruptured. Damage may not be visible immediately but can result in long-term turf loss.”

— USGA Green Section Record



2. Implementation of Frost Greens

Frost greens (temporary putting surfaces) will be introduced under the following conditions:

1. When frost is present on the greens or the underlying soil remains frozen.
2. When thawing or refreezing conditions risk damaging the turf.
3. When the Head Greenkeeper determines that play on the main greens would endanger turf health or cause compaction and shearing.

Only the Head Greenkeeper is authorised to decide when frost greens are in use or when main greens can reopen.

In the absence of the Head Greenkeeper, responsibility for implementing or removing frost greens may be delegated to a designated member of the Greens Staff, who will act under the same authority and follow the same standards outlined in this policy.

3. Use of Frost Greens

Frost greens are used to allow play to continue safely without damaging the main greens.

Players must use the designated frost greens when in place – no exceptions.

Frost greens are prepared to minimise disruption while protecting the course's long-term playability.

4. Competitions During Frost Conditions

If a competition is scheduled and frost greens are in use at the start of play, frost greens will remain in play for the entire duration of that competition, even if the frost lifts later in the day. This ensures fairness and consistency for all players by maintaining identical course conditions throughout the event.



5. Lifting of Frost Restrictions

Main greens will reopen only once the frost has completely lifted and the ground temperature is safe for normal play.

Even if frost appears to have cleared visually, shaded or low-lying areas may remain frozen beneath the surface.

The decision to reopen is based on turf safety and agronomic best practice, not time of day or member preference.

The Head Greenkeeper's decision is final and is made solely in the best interest of the course.

6. Communication of Frost Conditions

To ensure clarity and avoid confusion, Cleveland Golf Club will communicate frost green status as follows:

Morning Course Inspection: The greens staff will inspect the course early each morning during frost-prone periods.

Decision Announcement: Once a decision has been made, the status will be clearly communicated via:

- The club website and/or members' app
- Notices in the clubhouse and/or pro shop
- Direct communication to the Professional and Competitions Team for player awareness.

Members should always check the latest course status before play, particularly during winter months.

If conditions change during the day, an update will be posted as soon as it is practical and safe for staff to reassess the course.



7. Member Conduct and Complaints

Complaints or challenges regarding frost greens must not be directed to the Pro' Shop, Competitions Team, Head Greenkeeper, or Greens Staff.

Any concerns or disagreements with this policy must be submitted in writing to the Secretary addressed to the Management Committee, with clear reasoning and/or evidence provided.

The Committee will review all submissions at its next scheduled meeting and respond formally.

Members are reminded that all frost-related decisions are made by qualified staff in the best interest of course preservation, safety, and fairness.

8. Supporting Guidance

This policy aligns with best practices and guidance from:

United States Golf Association (USGA)

The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews (R&A)

Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI)

Approved by: Cleveland Golf Club Management Committee
Effective Date: