

LIBERTY CORNER, N.J. (Feb. 5, 2025) – Celebrating a game-changing career in golf course management, the United States Golf Association (USGA) today announced Rodney Lingle, CGCS, as the winner of the 2025 USGA Green Section Award. Presented annually since 1961, the Green Section Award honors distinguished service to golf through an individual's work with turfgrass.

An innovator, turfgrass field expert and mentor to countless golf course superintendents, Lingle began his career in 1974 at Hattiesburg Country Club in Mississippi. He joined Memphis Country Club as superintendent five years later and would ply his trade there for the next 37 years, during which time he invented products, advanced the science and art of quality putting surfaces and influenced the entire golf course maintenance industry with his curious mind and innovative tactics.

"Everyone in golf needs to know the name of Rod Lingle – and follow his example," said USGA CEO Mike Whan. "Rod has shaped careers, changed the way we think about golf course maintenance, and has never been satisfied with the status quo. But there isn't a greater legacy you can leave than to be counted as a revered teacher and friend. Golf is better because Rod cares, and that's why he's deserving of this award."

Lingle's lifelong dedication to experimenting with and perfecting the use of ultradwarf bermudagrass spurred an industry-wide movement, improving the putting and playing experience for countless golfers and golf courses across the country. That seminal work took root on greens at Streamsong, Atlanta Athletic Club, the RTJ Trail, Pinehurst Resort & Country Club and others in Arizona and Hawaii. It led to Lingle's development of Mach 1, an advanced turfgrass he eventually patented and is now available around the world.

An innovator at heart, Lingle also created the new greens mowing brush system after a golf course equipment manufacturer stopped making a previous model for walking mowers. Tinkering with various brushes at Memphis Country Club, Lingle eventually developed and patented the Greens Perfection Brush, Toro purchased the rights to use on mowers for the first four years – kickstarting a new era of innovation.

However, Lingle's greatest contributions to the game stem from his lifetime work as a mentor and collaborator - earning the respect of countless superintendents over four decades of work in golf. He held 10 on-site ultradwarf surface management workshops while at Memphis Country Club, hosting hundreds of superintendents to share his novel maintenance practices and turfgrass management techniques. Superintendents under his tutelage tout his generosity, ingenuity, drive, care and passion – a "North Star" among his peers, university researchers and colleagues in golf.

"I am very honored to be named the 2025 USGA Green Section Award winner, as working with the USGA Green Section through the years has been the most rewarding experience of my career," said Lingle. "A special thank you to the great staff in Memphis and Texas, you made all this possible by the hard work and dedication you provided. Your effort provided much of the foundation for the popularity and growth of ultradwarf greens in the South."

After 37 years at Memphis Country Club, Lingle moved on to Escondido Golf and Lake Club in Horseshoe Bay, Texas. He is a graduate of the University of Mississippi, where he received a B.S. in agronomy and golf course management.

Testimonials

- "I have known Rodney for 15+ years and have admired him not only for knowledge and expertise in many facets of our profession, but perhaps just as importantly for his willingness to share his knowledge and enthusiasm with his industry colleagues. Rodney was a pioneer in establishing best management practices for ultradwarfs. Many clubs through the Southeast have benefitted greatly from Rodney sharing his insights, not the least of which is your truly and our team at Pinehurst Resort." – Bob Farren, director of golf course management at Pinehurst Resort and 2024 Green Section Award recipient
- "Rodney's commitment to advancing others in the industry is profound, consistently providing logical, scientifically grounded explanations that elevate the understanding and success of everyone he encounters. I am genuinely grateful to have benefitted from Rodney's expertise and mentorship. He embodies the highest standards of a certified golf course superintendent and exemplifies the dedication, integrity and expertise this profession aspires to

uphold.” – Hank Kerfoot, president, Modern Turf

- “I knew from the first visit with Rodney at Memphis Country Club that he brought much more than ‘just an idea’ to the market. He brought a philosophy of learning, teaching, and success to his whole team. His true passion is not grass – his passion is watching others succeed after passing along what he learned from his toils and peers.” – Tom Langworthy, director of engineering, The Toro Company

USGA CEO Mike Whan announced Lingle’s Green Section Award honor at the 2025 Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Conference and Trade Show. He will be presented the award at the 2025 USGA Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 1, 2025, which will be held at Pinehurst Resort and Country Club. [Please click here for additional editorial content.](#)

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