

THE SUGARLOAF STORY

CLOSED UNTIL JULY.

How one harsh Maine winter permanently changed Sugarloaf Golf Club's approach to spring turf recovery.

Sugarloaf Golf Club

CARRABASSETT VALLEY, MAINE

Ryan Blake · Golf Course Superintendent

The Following Spring

The following year, Sugarloaf implemented GreenJacket Impermeable Covers and AFS insulation systems as part of a proactive winter turf protection strategy. The difference was immediate and undeniable.

— RYAN BLAKE · GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT, SUGARLOAF GOLF CLUB



PRIOR YEAR — WITHOUT PROTECTION

*Severe ice damage.
Course closed until July.*



FOLLOWING YEAR — WITH IMPERMEABLE + AFS

*Healthy spring recovery.
Greens opened on schedule.*

95%

OF PUTTING SURFACES
EMERGED WITHOUT
DAMAGE

Greens and surrounding turf emerged stronger, more uniform, and significantly ahead of the growing curve compared to the previous year. Protected surfaces showed healthier turf density, stronger early color, and earlier spring activity — a complete reversal from the year prior.



— SPRING UNCOVERING

Recovery in Progress

As covers were removed and insulation systems taken off, the contrast was immediate. Surfaces that had been protected remained vibrant and consistent — while unprotected areas lagged noticeably behind in color, density, and recovery pace.



— OBSERVATIONS DURING UNCOVERING

<p>Healthier Turf Density</p> <p>Noticeably denser coverage on all protected surfaces at first look.</p>	<p>Stronger Early Color</p> <p>Vivid green tone emerged immediately under every protected area.</p>	<p>Earlier Spring Activity</p> <p>Protected greens already ahead of the growing curve come spring.</p>	<p>Improved Putting Surfaces</p> <p>Consistency across protected surfaces exceeded all prior seasons.</p>
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What Ryan Saw

Superintendent Ryan Blake and his team closely monitored conditions throughout the spring. What they observed reinforced the value of a proactive approach to winter protection in severe northern environments.

CROWN HYDRATION PROTECTION

Crown hydration from freeze/thaw cycles and prolonged moisture exposure is one of the biggest northern climate threats. Protected surfaces showed strong resistance to winter injury.

EARLIER SPRING ACTIVITY

Protected surfaces were already ahead of the growing curve during early spring, allowing earlier mowing and maintenance without compromising turf health.

DORMANT SEED GERMINATION

Temperatures beneath protected surfaces became warm enough to support dormant seed germination earlier in the season — an unexpected early-season advantage.

OPERATIONAL CONFIDENCE

The systems created far greater confidence heading into spring uncovering, knowing surfaces had significantly improved protection from the season prior.



The consistency across the greens was the most impressive part. We were clearly ahead of where we normally are at this time of year.

RYAN BLAKE

GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT · SUGARLOAF GOLF CLUB
CARRABASSETT VALLEY, MAINE

FIELD NOTES · SUPERINTENDENT OBSERVATIONS

The Biggest Surprise.

Maine winter brings some of the most demanding conditions on the continent. Going into the first season, the primary question was whether the system would hold up. What happened surpassed every expectation.

BIGGEST SURPRISE

"How much snow load weight the system could withstand before there is any damage to turf beneath the protection."

BIGGEST BENEFIT

"Prevents crown hydration – the most consistent result observed across every single protected surface."

10

/10

OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING



"If you are in a harsh winter environment, there is no other option than the impermeables and AFS insulation."

— RYAN BLAKE · GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT,
SUGARLOAF GOLF CLUB

— A BETTER WAY FORWARD

Sugarloaf Golf Club's experience demonstrates the operational value of proactive winter turf protection in severe northern environments. Where it matters most, the team gained:

Proven Protection

Reduced winterkill, ice encasement, desiccation, and low-temperature kill on every protected surface.

Stronger Springs

Faster green-up, healthier turf density, and improved season-opening consistency course-wide.

Operational Advantage

Earlier playability, more predictable conditions, and a better member experience from opening day.

PROTECT. GROW. ACCELERATE.

EVERY COURSE. EVERY WINTER. EVERY STORY IS DIFFERENT.

We'd love to share yours.