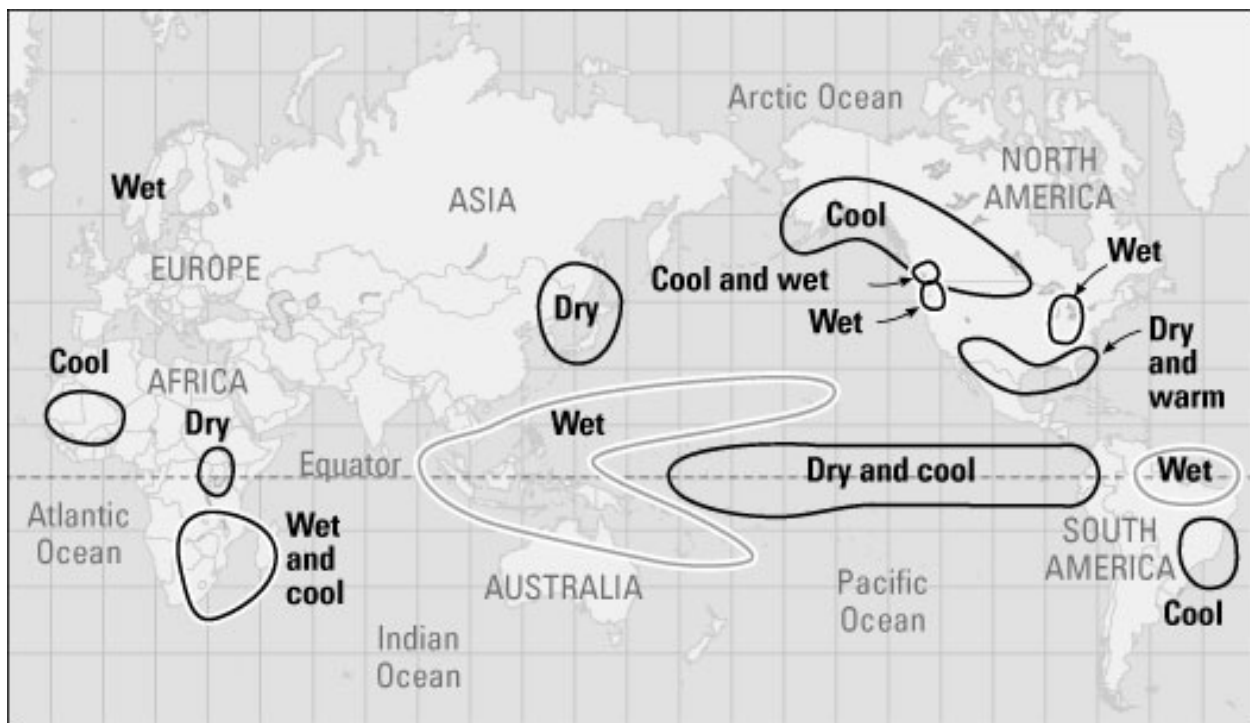


## La Nina with a Twist of Arctic Oscillation

*By Patrick O'Brien and Chris Hartwiger, USGA SE Region Agronomists*

Although the winter of 2011-2012 is only about two weeks old, we are noticing some favorable patterns for the weather in our region. The meteorologists tell us we are in a La Nina pattern. La what? La Nina is weather pattern characterized by cooling of the ocean waters in the central Pacific Ocean. These cooler ocean waters actually influence weather here in the southeast and in a La Nina winter, we can expect temperatures to be above average and drier than normal. Figure 1 shows general patterns for La Nina winters. The good news is that warmer and drier conditions promote more play and help courses generate more revenue in these slower times of year.



Caption: La Nina winter weather impacts that commonly happen. Source: ([www.Dummies.com](http://www.Dummies.com))

You will notice that when we discussed LaNina, we used the term “on average.” Sometimes there is a short term weather pattern called an arctic oscillation that takes over and causes the mercury to plummet in the southeast. This occurred on January 2 – 4 when night time temperatures went down as low as the upper teens and day time highs stayed in the 30’s and low 40’s for many southern cities. Anytime arctic and golf are mentioned in the same sentence, it’s not going to be good for golf. Cold weather keeps away all but the most avid players and less revenue is generated.

The week of January 2 – 4 marked the first time covers were deployed in large numbers on ultradwarf putting greens in the southeast. For a refresher course on how to cover greens quickly and effectively, please refer to this article and video on covering and uncovering a putting green:

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs003/1103157499740/archive/1104208581565.html> .

The next few weeks for us will involve travel to turf conferences and a few on course visits. As you begin preparing for the 2012 season, please contact us if we may assist in your preparations in any way.

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