The Bad Days of Summer '83... Our November Panel

A feature of the November meeting at Leisure World was a four-man panel that discussed how the summer of 1983 had affected their respective golf courses—sort of a "How I spent my summer fighting the elements" for superintendents. The four were Jim Christy of Shannon Green, Ken Braun of Bonnie View, Walter Montross of Springfield, and Pat O'Brien of the USGA Section in Richmond.

Jim Christy led off, saying that his initial problems involved getting the equipment at the course he had taken over back into shape. Then, when the drought of mid-summer came along, it brought problems of insects attacking the irrigated areas. The water shortage meant he couldn't water tees or fairways and was reduced to hand-watering the greens to keep them going. A spell of cool weather at the end of August enabled him to fertilize and water the greens, which brought them back. Then, the irrigation system wasn't working properly because of controller problems, and a large turtle getting stuck in the intake pipe more or less toppled the summer off.

Walt Montross stressed the personal problems that developed as summer grew hotter and drier. One thing that showed up was his own loss of patience and irritation with his crew. Because of the lack of rain, there were no breaks for either superintendent or crew, and he found that the situation had a bad affect on attitude and morale, the causes of which he did not immediately recognize at the time.

Ken Braun kept track of the weather. The water was like in Baltimore, and he recorded 57 days above 90° and 11 days above 100°. The USGA had told him that shutting the water off would get rid of the poa annua, and it did. Because Bonnie View is on city water, he watered fairways only 11 times, but when he did water, he used a lot of it—one hour per set. This past summer demonstrated the ineffectiveness of the greens watering system—where the sprinklers didn't overlap, there was poor coverage, and it showed.

Lee Dieter talked about his fight against goose grass. He put on two applications of Betasan, which kept it down, but he thinks that cutting the greens lower, using more topdressing can contribute to the spread of goose grass. Farmington tested Betasan and Ronstar together: 50 pounds per acre of Ronstar on year-old Penncross and some older, mismatched varieties, cut to 5/32", gave 95% control of goose grass. Bob Lambert commented that he had used 65 pounds per acre on greens with a history of goose grass infestation and got 90-95% good results. Various members commented on the causes of goose grass moving in, in addition to Lee's view that cutting too close is the major factor, but Pat O'Brien thought the Ph of the green had a lot to do with it, while Mike McKenzie felt heavy play resulting in more compaction was a factor.

Pat O'Brien spoke in general terms of the courses he had visited in Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia over the summer, all of which had weather just as hot as Baltimore. The effects of dry weather showed up in diseases of fairway grasses, and a lot of money was spent on fungicides to combat diseases that came in the water that had to be applied. Problems with night watering pointed up the inadequacies of manual watering systems. Many annual weeds multiplied more than usual, and tree root problems were more evident this summer. He also found a lot of equipment trouble, as many clubs had apparently not replaced old equipment over the last four years.

Voter on Officers, By-Laws Are Slated

Key items of business at the December 13 meeting are election of new officers for 1984 and approval or disapproval of the by-laws changes that were carried in the September newsletter, plus a discussion of the issue of an executive director or executive secretary for the association.

The following slate was proposed by the nominating committee composed of Ben Stagg, Mike McKenzie, and Ron Hall:

- President — Mike Larsen
- Vice President — Gerry Gerard
- Secretary — Wayne Evans
- Treasurer — Lee Dieter

In addition, two directors will be elected to three-year terms from these four candidates: Bill Neus, Tom List, Ken Ingraham, and Nick Vance.