

Dear Fred,

After visiting a number of golf course in the Chicagoland area, I thought I would drop you a note on some of the problems we have seen. Superintendents might like to know that everyone was in the same boat when it came to losing grass this summer.

Let's get together and start a pool to determine the day of the first snow fall in Chicago! The winner will get a free bag of Penncross to help replace some of the turf that was lost this season. Seriously, the summer of 1983 will probably go down in history as one of the most difficult for golf course turfgrass management in history. In our travels throughout the region we have seen wide spread loss of turfgrass caused by everything from simple **Poa annua** wilt (we always knew that **Poa annua** does not tolerate heat stress very well), to the entire array of fungal diseases (stimulated by high night time temperatures and high humidities) too, to problems with insects (have you ever seen so many Cutworms!). Some golf courses had some of the problems but most of them had all of them. Speaking of diseases, both Penn State and Michigan State have recently identified what those round patches on fairways and on some greens really is. It turns out to be a species of Ophiopolus Patch ... something only rarely seen in this part of the country. Field trials are underway now to determine the best control but, probably due to the weather, we now have a new disease to contend with.

If there was one positive aspect to this one type of weather it is that any weaknesses that exist on the golf course quickly are seen. For example, if a golf course Superintendent's fungicide or insecticide spray program needed to be strengthened this year certainly showed the need for more pesticide usage. The dry weather made the golf course Superintendent rely upon his irrigation system more than in recent years and any weaknesses in it quickly came to light. Sprinkler heads not turning ... poor coverage ... problems generally with the sprinkler heads, etc. all came to light. The vast majority of the irrigation systems in this part of the country simply never were designed to totally replace natural rainfall so, when it became hot and dry and the irrigation systems were turned on ... and then it stayed on, any deficiencies quickly showed up.

Therefore, the summer of 1983 is a good learning experience. All of us certainly know how to diagnose disease and insect problems better, we appreciate the value of a good irrigation system and we more fully understand and appreciate the strengths and weaknesses (especially of **Poa annua**) of the turfgrasses we are attempting to maintain on our golf courses.

Just thought I would drop you a line on some of the things we saw in our travels throughout the region this summer. It certainly will make for great discussion during the conference season starting this fall.

Best regards and reserve December 1st, for me!

**Stanley J. Zontek**  
North-Central Director, USGA

## DECEMBER 12-15, 1983

Pennsylvania Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show, Hershey Lodge & Convention Center, West Chocolate Avenue & University Drive, Hershey, PA. Contact: Christine E. King, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council, 412 Blanchard Street, Bellefonte, PA 16823. (814) 355-8010.

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