Observations of Turf Problems — Spring 1986

R. T. Kane, U. of I. Advisor

The primary problem observed on golf course turf this past spring has been winter kill which resulted from the unusual late fall and early winter weather we experienced in the upper midwest. Heavy rains in November were followed by severe cold spells in December. The excess rainfall led



to "crown hydration," or excess water in coronal cells of plants. Subsequent hard freezes caused injury or death to these hydrated cells because of ice formation. **Poa annua** and bentgrass in low, wet areas of fairways and greens were most affected. Also severely affected was newly seeded stands of perennial rye.

Poa annua showed how much more susceptible it is than bentgrass to this type of winter injury, since on many courses the bents were much less damaged. Lack of snow cover we experienced later in the winter, coupled with freeze and thaw cycles this spring, contributed further to winter kill of **Poa**. Dessication of **Poa** on exposed sites was a common problem.

These often exasperating winter kill problems were further compounded by the dry, cool weather conditions this spring. Recovery from winter injury was slowed, and many grasses were late coming out of winter dormancy. Washington (and other South German types) and Penncross bent putting greens were slow to green up — most greens were thin and had that





familiar dark blue or purple cast well into May. Early growth of bentgrasses was coarse with surface running of stems and stolons. Cool soil temperatures into May also caused **Poa annua** to remain off color, especially **Poa** trying to recover from winter injury. Fast green-speed management (low height of cut, low N, sand rootzones) may increase green-up topgrowth problems when spring weather is unfavorable.

Not much disease activity was observed this spring, primarily due to the cool, dry weather. Some common leaf spot and red leaf spot was observed on bentgrass greens. Leaf spot was more severe in bluegrass roughs and higher cut fairways where higher humidity was maintained in the canopy. Some pink snow mold occurred early this spring, but was infrequent and not very damaging. Snow molds usually occurred where fall fungicide applications were prevented or washed away by November rainfalls.

Diagnosis of Turf Problems

The diagnostic lab at Oak Brook is now ready to go. Disease diagnoses can be conducted by a visit from the trained plant pathologist (me), or by submission of samples directly to the lab (drop-off or mail-in). For submitted samples, certain information is useful to aid diagnosis and should be included. This information is as follows:

- a) identify the plant species affected, including cultivar name if known
- b) record the cultural conditions under which the grass is growing — include recent fertilizer or pesticide applications (cont'd. page 7)

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c) describe the overall appearance of the problem and any symptoms on individual plants (e.g. rings, patches, leaf dieback, root rot)

Also, properly collected and packaged samples are a must:

- a) samples should contain both diseased and healthy specimens
- b) samples from patch diseased turf should be taken from the outer edges of the patch
- c) always try to include the root system when a root disease problem is suspected
- d) do not soak leaf or soil core samples in water or wrap in plastic bags
- e) for delivery, wrap samples in several layers of newspaper or paper towel and pack tightly in a box
- f) if package is mailed, try for an overnight or express service
- g) don't forget to label all samples, include all pertinent information, and don't forget your name and phone number.

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ROBERT M. LOHMANN of Illinois was elected to the Board of Governors of the American Society of Golf Course Architects at the group's recent annual meeting in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL. Lohmann, whose office is located at 800 McHenry Ave.,

Crystal Lake, IL, was elected to a three year term.

The Society's Board of Governors makes all final decisions on policy for the group that includes the leading golf course architects from the U.S., Canada and Mexico.



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Stake strikes, kills golfer in freak Douglas accident

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Rocky Mountain News Staff

658-5303

An Arvada golfer died when his golf cart hit a rope staked to the ground and the stake flew up and struck him in the head at the Arrowhead Golf Club in northern Douglas County, officials said.

Carl C. Yanda, 41, was airlifted to St. Anthony Hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 1:30 p.m. Saturday. He died from a "blunt trauma," a Douglas County coroner's autopsy found.

Editor's Note: The above "freak accident" happened to me in April of 1982. Lucky for me I came out of it with fractures above and below the eyes, broken nose, broken teeth, and suffered the loss of smell and taste. To this day I have only 80% of my smell and taste. Reading this gives me a shiver of how fast one's life can change. Just a freak accident, something that we all have on our courses are ropes and stakes. My suggestion is never to use the poly rope with any kind of a heavy stake or metal pipe (in my case). Another "freak accident" with the poly rope happened to one of our members just a month or so after my accident. The member was on a practice tee of another club and the tee was marked off with poly rope tied to round tee markers. On his backswing the golfer's club struck the rope, pulling the tee marker from the ground and the spike struck in the calf of his leg. As innocent as that poly rope looks, it can be deadly. Let's play it safe in the future and be careful where and how we use this rope.