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# Extreme Heat and Drought Take Toll on Area Turf: Looking Back at Summer 2005

*In the August issue of On Course, we talked about the heat and drought we have faced during this summer of 2005, and compared it to the dismal summer of 1988. Also, several superintendents discussed the problems they have faced at their courses and how they were coping. Irrigation water availability and quality were the main issues; it was much too dry then for typical summer disease problems.*

*The weather pattern seemed to be changing, at long last, by late September—but the drought and heat that engulfed northern and parts of central Illinois during summer 2005 were simply brutal.*

Unfortunately, that weather scenario has continued right into mid-September, as higher-than-average temperatures and little rain remained in the forecast. We did have a nice break in temperatures and some significant rain during the middle two weeks of August, but as of this writing we are back to the hot and dry trend (20-plus days without rain).

To summarize, the drought and heat that still engulf northern and parts of central Illinois have been brutal. Affected areas are seven to nine inches below normal precipitation, after a July and August that saw many areas in northern Illinois get only 50 to 60% of their normal rainfall. Average temperatures have been 2° to 4° F above normal throughout the summer, and we expect the Chicago area to record around 40 days with daily high temperatures at or above 90° F. Very low relative humidity (dewpoint) readings have accompanied many of those 90°-plus days, which puts an extra ET stress on already ailing turf with shallow root systems!

At least as we head into autumn, we can look forward to shorter (even if still hot) days and cooler nights, which will help moderate soil temperatures and take some of the stress off the grass. Those poor little suffering plants will finally get a chance to grow some new roots, rhizomes, stolons, etc., and replace lost carbs, proteins and other nutrients. What superintendents need to do for now is:

- Keep syringing and hand-watering weak, shallow-rooted turf—don't let those recovering plants go into another drought stress!
- PICK UP the fertility! Green speed shouldn't be an issue now, let's grow some grass!
- Core-aerify anything that's rooted down, or at least deep-tine with big, solid tines if you don't want to pull cores. Those aerification channels will be important to provide space for roots to grow, plus allow flushing rains or irrigation to cleanse the soil of accumulated salts.

Although the drought curtailed symptoms of some perennial diseases like dollar spot and Pythium, the heat brought on other diseases that we have not been used to seeing. Off-white or lighter green, irregular patch symptoms on putting greens (especially newer bent greens) have been prevalent this year. These patches have primarily been aesthetic in nature, with perhaps some mild thinning of turf. We believe these symptoms are linked to late spring/early summer root infection by the take-all pathogen (*Gaeumannomyces graminis*) or the summer patch pathogen (*Magnaporthe poae*). Normally, bentgrass could support a fair level of infection by these fungi, but the heat and stress of this season accentuated root or vascular impairment, causing the mild symptoms.

Another odd "disease" symptom we have observed this year appears to be related to a mycorrhizal bloom. Symptoms initially started as yellow patches that would eventually collapse and become necrotic. Again, they appeared on newer greens that had been gassed and regrassed in the last two to three years. Upon examining the underlying thatch layer, we noticed a thick gelatinous mat of

mycelium and spores, and the roots had spores literally bursting out of them. We asked around and tentatively identified the fungus as a *Glomus* sp., which normally acts as beneficial mycorrhizal symbiont. Under this year's heat, we believe the fungus' metabolism became highly active, and it bloomed much like an alga. As one of our colleagues phrased it, the *Glomus* sp. became a "mycorrhizae gone wild," and started doing more harm than good.

On the insect front, grubs could be an especially bad problem this fall. Some Chicagoland courses have reported early grub outbreaks (last week of August), and early scouting has revealed that these problems are due to the smaller second instars, which means there still is another stage of development left. Since Japanese beetles and masked chafer adults lay their eggs in moist areas, golf courses and other irrigated landscapes were probably more of a target in this drought year. In addition, the heat may have caused the adults to lay their eggs later in the season, which means grub problems may last later into the fall.

As this article "hits news-stands," the brutal summer of '05 should be soundly in the rearview mirror, and turf growth and recovery should be the name of the game. However, let's not forget how stressful this summer was on our turf health and water resources . . . because if history holds true, we'll be in for another doozy in a maximum of five to ten years, and the lessons learned now will make us more apt to handle the stress then.



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# Derek Florian

## 1974-2005

### "My Best Friend"

It all started eight years ago when we worked together at Prairie Landing Golf Club. I had just finished getting my degree from Rutgers, while Derek had one more year to go at Kishwaukee for his and was working as an intern. We started spending a lot of time together outside of work and I remember driving with my wife out to his house in Sycamore many a time to hang out with Derek and Jennifer. We had never had a reason to go to Sycamore before! We would have dinner, play euchre and consume way too many beverages most of the time. The following year, we were both assistants and worked very well together. Too well together at times—I'm sure we drove Tony Kalina nuts—we were like "two peas in a pod." Derek and Jennifer ended up purchasing a townhouse on the same street as my wife and I. This meant the start of the "car pool" to work: jamming out to our favorite tunes on the way, putting in a hard day's work, and then a stop for cold beer on the way home to try and make sense of it all—life was great. He drove one week and I the next. At the time he had a purple Civic and I a 12-year-old '86 Escort with 112k miles. Boy, how times have changed!

Our career paths seemed to follow one another over the years until we joined up again working for the City of Aurora. This gave us the opportunity to take our relationship to the next level. We both loved what we did and worked for the same employer, which enabled us to share our daily experiences with someone who cared and understood. We kept in touch with each other throughout the day, each and every day. It would start with a call around 6 a.m. after we got our crews out the door. We would call to see what the other had planned for the day on the course, work out some equipment swapping, or learn if our paths might cross

during the day. There was always an afternoon call to see if, when and where we were going for that "cold one" after work. We would argue who called who more, and sometimes would see which one of us could hold off making "the call" the longest. One of us would break down by 9:30 a.m. When it came time for monthly meetings, if we weren't playing together, we were at least traveling together.

Derek's dedication to his golf course was unquestionable. Even with the year we had this year, not a blade of grass suffered at Fox Valley Golf Club, which was remarkable given what he had to work with. He gave it his all and then some, even at the expense of his family at times. There were times when his dedication made me feel

guilty that I wasn't as dedicated. When we talked on weekend afternoons, I would be coming home from squeezing in some time with my family at the zoo, birthday parties or a family gathering before heading back to work. Derek would have already been at work for hours and would give me an update on what was going on at his place. To the common golfer, Derek's extra efforts went unnoticed, but he did it for himself. He was a perfectionist!

Last summer we had celebrated a couple of milestone birthdays, his 30th and my 40th. That celebration went on all year. Derek was instrumental in helping me break in my finished basement, which was completed last fall. We would put on some tunes, talk shop and play pool for hours. He had told me back in our days at Prairie Landing that I was a great guy to know, but that I didn't give many people the chance. Derek took the time to get to know me and I let him in.

We never talked specifics, but Derek believed that he wasn't going to live a full life on account of his family history. The way he got worked up about his golf course,



especially this summer on account of the weather and lack of water, and me having a beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other while he was telling me this, I usually wasn't in any position to disagree with him. Neither of us had ever mentioned him only living a half-life. As Derek was a young guy and new superintendent, I always thought it would only be a matter of time before he settled down and learned to work smarter, not harder, not trying to do everything himself.

Derek was never shy on showing his affection, especially towards other guys. It is safe to say he definitely had kissed more different men in his life than women. I guess it was his way of showing that you were special to him. At gatherings like parties or golf league, it wasn't uncommon for someone to get bear-hugged and kissed on the cheek from Derek after he had five or six beers. I fell victim so many times that I stopped counting or putting up resistance.

The time when I get tearful the most (such as while I'm writing this) is when I think of the effect he had on my son, Aiden. Derek loved him like he were his own and they had a lot of good times horsing around together. Aiden misses him but does not really understand. My wife now has concerns that I have the energy to go on looking after two families and two golf courses. Even though one of those responsibilities will change in a month or two, I have no question that Derek would not want it any other way and would be there for my family and their needs. This tragedy has been an experience that will affect my family and life forever. I could babble on enough about Derek to fill a book, but it would not mean anything to anyone but me. With all the time we spent together, we were never able to make sense of it all. What happened to Derek doesn't make sense, but I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to spend the time I did with him.

REST IN PEACE, MY FRIEND!

—Todd Schmitz



Todd Schmitz and Derek Florian.

I have been searching my mind for an appropriate epitaph for my buddy Derek. My first thoughts were to come up with something amusing (as I am usually inclined to hide my true emotions with humor) such as "Derek Florian—Great guy, lousy driver," or some such thing. However, after talking with Jennifer, Derek's wife, who informed me that HE was the GOOD driver in the family—my thoughts turned more to concern for the safety of those he left here on this earth. I hope I don't sound crass, but when I think of Derek—of the day he came to Aurora Country Club to interview for the assistant superintendent's job, of the times we played golf together and of the times we blabbed our voices hoarse on the radio or phone—I can't help but start giggling. See, that's the legacy Derek left with me. He made me laugh harder than anyone I have ever known.

Derek was THAT GUY. The guy you gravitated toward when he entered the room. The guy who was at the center of the loudest guffaws in the bar. He had Chris Farley down pat. Billy Bob in *Sling Blade*? Did him better than Billy Bob himself, mmm hmm. He even did a damn good Schmitz (did you know that, Todd?). And the reason he could bring a bar room to its knees in laughter? It's the same reason why people loved him so much. The same reason why his golf course received such raves. The same reason he had the best lawn in his subdivision. And the reason why his career was heading for the stars: Derek threw his entire being into everything he did. There was no half-assed effort when Derek was involved, just full-throttle, pedal-to-the-metal, balls-out effort and dedication. He was overdrive personified.

Well, I miss Derek Florian now. He was too young to be taken, and I feel—as all of us who knew him feel—that I've been cheated out of many years of laughter and friendship. I miss our golf games where nothing is sacred and beer cans are boobytrapped to leak on shirts, bags are unstrapped so they topple out onto fairways, legs are maimed by the swing of a driver, and my shoes get filled with ketchup and mustard. You had to be there—it really was fun. I miss Fridays in the Schmitz basement (though I only made a few). I miss hearing him freak out about the one blade of grass he lost all summer.

So yeah, I'm sad about Derek's passing, and I'm angry that one of the best people I've ever known was taken away from those of us who loved him. But, you know, when I'm sitting in my car alone at a stoplight, or when I'm sitting on a sprayer alone at the golf course and I start thinking about my buddy Derek, I still giggle. I think of his red face and his infectious personality and I just giggle like a schoolgirl. Then I think that, given time to heal, we who feel his loss most will be fine. Because, you see, I know that he's fine—he's still making us laugh, for cryin' out loud.

—John Gurke





*Receiving the GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award in 2003.*

# Dudley H. Smith

## 1930-2005

- *Head Golf Course Superintendent, Silver Lake Country Club, 1958-2001*
- *Past President, MAGCS*
- *Past President, Illinois Turfgrass Foundation*
- *Founder, Charles Bartlett Award*
- *Recipient, GCSAA Distinguished Service Award*

Dudley H. Smith passed away on Sunday, August 28, 2005. There will never be another Dudley. When he attended a Midwest meeting, everyone knew who he was, though he knew only a few of the new members by name. It didn't matter what the function may have been—local, regional or national—everyone in the room recognized Dud and would say hello.

Dud began his career at Silver Lake Golf Club in 1958. He was taken under the wing of Walter Fuchs and the MacIntosh brothers, Dave and Jock. He was one of the younger members of the Midwest, but everyone liked Dud no matter what their age. Dud became involved in the Midwest, becoming a Board member and finally president in 1967. He also became very involved in the Midwest Regional Turf Foundation and the ITF as well. He went through the board chairs before becoming president of both organizations. His most recent involvement was as a board member of the Musser Turf Foundation.

We all remember when Dudley was presented with GCSAA's Distinguished Service Award in 2003. I still remember his remarks that evening, and how everyone talked about them for the remainder of the conference.

There are many of us who worked for Dudley, beginning at an early age, toiling our way through the ranks to finally become his assistant. We were all well-prepared for the next step—our own jobs as golf course superintendents. He was always there if anyone needed advice or just someone to talk to. Dud was there for others as well. He would call or write a note complimenting someone on a job well done, and this always took place not in the limelight, but behind the scenes.

I will miss my good friend Dudley very much. We haven't seen each other as much as we would have liked



*Marlene and Dudley in January 2001.*

*A few years earlier...*

over the past few years, but we were in each other's thoughts. When we talked, he would always ask how things were going, and what problems we were having. He wanted to know how many new guys were in the area, and how the old-timers (of which I am one) were doing.

Cuddles loved life, his family and his profession. Dudley H. Smith will be missed. Rest in peace, my FRIEND!

—Ed Fischer

Dudley H. Smith—son of H. Dudley Smith—grandson of Dudley H. Smith and so on, according to lore, to the beginning of history.

Dudley came from Kingston, NY, where during the Depression years he caddied at the local country club at the end of their block. At this early stage of life, Dudley's wont in life became set to golf course work.

I had the privilege to be one of the first in the Chicago area to meet him. The GCSAA convention was in Ohio just prior to his moving from an assistant's job at Hershey Country Club to Chicago. I have seen a picture of Dud sitting at the banquet table with both John Coghill and Ben Warren—two men who would soon become important in his life and career, although Dudley didn't yet know either of them.

Ben Warren, along with Bert Rost, Oscar Borgmeyer and my father, Paul E. Burdett, had incorporated the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation in 1957. John Coghill, owner of Silver Lake Country Club, was soon to become Dudley's employer for over the next 40 years.

Dudley's father was a salesman while Dud and his siblings were growing up. Dudley understood and had compassion for all salespeople who were part of his life. My dad was selling to Silver Lake Country Club when Dud came to be superintendent—Dad addressed Dud as "Sonny" or "Kid," terms that were not fully appreciated. At that time, I was running around and delivering for the family business.

I was invited by some superintendents, including Eddie Wollenberg, Roy Nelson and Dudley, to join the superintendents at the Ranch House in Chicago Heights for their regular Monday lunch. Dud passed me an

order that he had written down. When I gave the order to Dad, he said, "You might as well take care of the Kid, you've earned it." Of course, he meant that I should continue to call on Dudley and be his salesman, since Dud had not cared to be called "Kid" by anyone.

At that time, Dudley had a room at the end of the porch in the old Silver Lake clubhouse (at that time, the Coghills' home). After a long day of being on the road, I would stop there and get up a gin rummy game with Dudley. The deck of cards was always kept warm. By this time, Marilyn and I had been married and when I got home, I told her that Dud had wanted to play gin—but didn't tell her that **both** Dud and I enjoyed the relaxation of playing gin. At golf course superintendents' meetings, several of us had a gin game—very seldom did anyone lose very much, yet we had lots of fun and relaxation.

A certain superintendents' meeting at Palos Country Club became quite a legendary case of how obsessed we were with gin rummy. There were four of us playing gin at that meeting: Mike Bavier, Peter Voykin, Dudley and me. They closed the clubhouse between 11 p.m. and midnight. Someone obtained the keys for the American Legion clubhouse in Orland Park from Peter Vandercook, so we moved the game there "but just for a little while."

Marilyn called my dad about 1 a.m. and Dad drove the route to Palos Country Club and found that the clubhouse was locked and there had been no accidents reported that night. About 7 a.m., Peter called what he thought was his shop to tell the men their instructions for the day and said, "Honey, why are you at the shop?" He had dialed his home instead, where his wife had answered the phone.

*(continued on page 38)*



*Back in the day . . .*



*Dudley with his old-timer friends (L to R) Albie Staudt, Paul and Peter Voykin, and Eddie Fischer.*



*With Peter Voykin.*



*On a recent (and successful) fishing trip on Lake Michigan.*



*The Smiths on an Alaska cruise in 2001.*



*Helping out with the U. S. Open at Olympia Fields.*

The game broke up—later that day after a short sleep, I drove to see the other three culprits. Dud was spraying greens, Mike was mowing greens with his walking greens mower (not very straight, though) and Pete was resting in his office.

Dudley enjoyed teasing salesmen—especially me.

I regularly used to walk out on the course to see the superintendent rather than wait in his office for the rest of the day. One of the grounds personnel at Silver Lake was Phil. Phil had a specific truck for doing his work and it was identified as "Phil's truck." As I was walking out to see Dud, I saw Phil's truck several times going hither and yon around the course. I kept looking for Dudley in hopes of obtaining a sale. It was over an hour before I went back to the shop and perhaps 15 to 20 minutes later, Dudley came to the shop. When he came in, he explained that he had been driving "Phil's truck."

When I got into my own business after Dad passed on, Dudley suggested that I have made a heavy-duty stake for holding rope to mark off special areas. The stakes available at that time were of very thin metal. After some time, I got a manufacturer to make me some and as that took off, additional items were added to the line and Master of the Links split off from the rest of the company.

At one time when the convention was in Las Vegas, Marlene and Dudley had flown out and rented a car. I drove out since I had to take the booth set-up with me. They then drove to see some friends and relatives. During their travels, they picked up a cradle that one of their kids had used quite awhile prior so their new grandchild could use it. They brought it back to Vegas to where I was staying and asked if I had room to take it back with me to their house. Of course, I told them that there was plenty of room in my car. Nobody could say no to a request from Dudley and Marlene. When I delivered it to their house in Frankfort, it was late in the day, and Dudley invited me to have some ice cream with them. (He said he always had ice cream last thing before bed.)

There was a time when Dudley was in the hospital in Joliet. Rick called me and I went down to see Dudley

with a deck of cards. We sat and played gin for several hours. When he asked, "Who won?" I said, "This one is on me"—a comment that is always rare indeed. Dudley was always ready to live up to his debts and obligations.

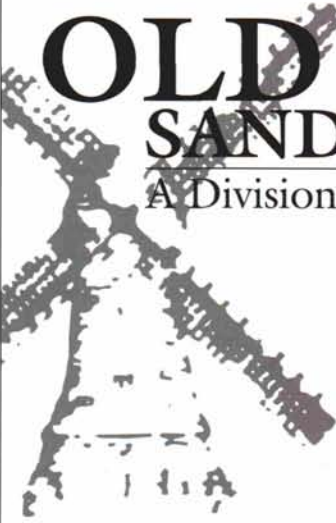
I retired several years ago. Dudley never wanted to retire. We have seen each other infrequently since then—but

still a phone call or a gin game would be scheduled, and we both still enjoyed being together.

All of us have been blessed by our individual exposure to Dudley H. Smith.

—Jim Burdett





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# 2004-2005

## RAY GERBER EDITORIAL AWARD AND FRED D. OPPERMAN EDITORIAL AWARD CONTESTANTS

Cathy Miles Ralston *Editor*

*Without further ado, we present the contenders for the 2004-2005 Ray Gerber and Fred D. Opperman Editorial Awards. Eligible articles appeared in On Course between September 2004 and August 2005. Gerber Award finalists were authored by MAGCS members who at the time of writing and publication were golf course superintendents. Opperman Award finalists were authored by MAGCS members who at the time of writing and publication were MAGCS members with class C, D, E, F or G status. "On Course with the President," "Director's Column," "Super-N-Site," "Midwest Breezes" and miscellaneous shorter items are not eligible, nor are articles originally published elsewhere and then reprinted in On Course. Recipients will be honored at the 53rd Annual Midwest Turf Clinic on November 2.*

### GERBER CONTESTANTS

2004	
September	Aggressive Green Aerification: A Case Study – Julius Albaugh & Frank Heery
	September of My Years – Paul Voykin
October	Surviving the 2004 Spring Floods – Jeff Donahoe
November	Safeguarding Against Vandalism – Doug Davis
2005	
January	Time to Run – Jon Jennings
March	The Illinois Golf Hall of Fame – Brian Bossert
May	The Learning Curve of a Golf Course Grow-In – Robert Graziano
July	The Return of the Walker Cup – Jon Jennings
	Local, Not Regional, Chapters Best for Superintendents – Mike Bavier
August	Bunker Overhaul the Cornerstone of Award-Winning Renovation Project – Dan Dinelli

### OPPERMAN CONTESTANTS

2004	
September	What's In YOUR Water – Dan Glitto
October	Making Sense of Alphabet Soup – Dan Glitto
November	Dispelling Common Myths: ACSP for Golf Courses – Peter Leuzinger & Joellen Zeh
2005	
January	Another Helping of Alphabet Soup – Dan Glitto
February	No!!! Ask the Idiot (Part I, February; Part II, March) – Patrick Maksymiu
	Chicago and the Championships of the USGA – Brian Baker
March	How to Defeat Those Annoying Pop-Ups – Justin Wheeler
April	Landscape Beds, From the Bottom Up – Dave Marquardt
May	The Golf Paradox – Greg Martin
June	Safeguard Your Computer TODAY! – Justin Wheeler
July	Does Your Course's Teeing System Make Sense? – Raymond Hearn

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Charles J. Fiore Co.	Martin Implement Sales
Chicagoland Turf	Master of the Links
Clauss Brothers, Inc.	Meadow Equipment, Sales & Service
Arthur Clesen, Inc.	Nels Johnson Tree Experts
Commercial Turf	Old Dutch Sand Co.
Conserv FS	On Target Animal Damage Control
Duntelman Turf Farms	Palatine Oil Company
Frenzer Topdressing	Prime Turf
GreenCycle, Inc.	Rabine Paving
Growing Solutions, Inc.	Reinders, Inc.
Halloran & Yauch	Riverwalls Ltd.
Raymond Hearn	Syngenta
Golf Course Designs	Timberline
H & E Sod Nursery	Trzinski Golf Course Photography
Huber Ranch Sod Nursery	Turf Concepts
Hydrologic	Turf Professionals Equipment Co.
Water Management Systems	Waupaca Sand & Solutions
Illinois Goose Control	Wild Goose Chase
Illinois Pump	