

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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The 195-yard 11th hole at Colonial Williamsburg's Golden Horseshoe Green Course, designed by Rees Jones, features an amphitheater green nestled above a sharp slope to a pond in front. For more on new courses, see pages 23-26.

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Ice, wind and fire

Startling snowstorm buries Midwest

By Peter Blais

The Halloween snowstorm that blanketed the upper Midwest horrified superintendents, forcing many to close courses early and leaving them shaking their heads for failing to blow out irrigation systems or make chemical and fertilizer applications earlier than usual.

Originally forecast to dump less than four to six inches of snow, the early-season storm left 28 inches of the white stuff in Minneapolis and as much as 40 inches farther north near Duluth, Minn., and Superior, Wis. That's close to half the average yearly snowfall in all three areas.

Southern Minnesota, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri received a mixture of snow and freezing rain, resulting in tree damage, power outages and delayed chemical and fertilizer applications.

"It was the largest single recorded snowfall here in the last 100 years," reported superintendent David Kohlbr of the 37.9 inches deposited on his Donald Ross-designed Northland Country Club in Duluth.

Kohlbr was fortunate. He blew out his irrigation system Oct. 1 and was just applying the last snow mold application to the final tee as the snow began falling around 1 p.m. on Oct. 31.

"My major concern was that the ground wasn't frozen yet," he added. "Snow mold could thrive in that stuff and we could have some real problems, especially on the fairways, next spring."

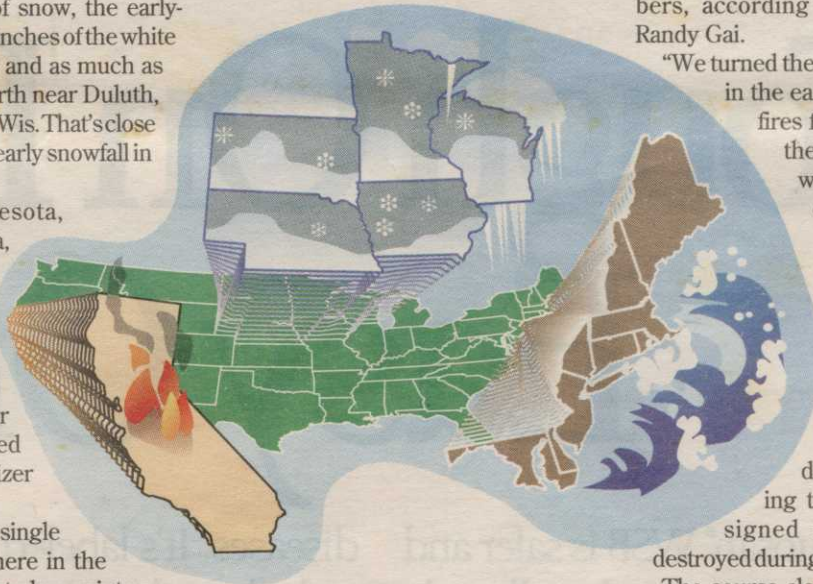
Kohlbr also feared crown dehydra

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Hurricane slashes, floods East Coast

By Mark Leslie

Fronted by ferocious winds and coinciding with high tide, Hurricane Grace blasted the East Coast from Maryland to Maine on Oct. 30, leaving some areas looking like a war zone — complete with National Guard troops. Golf courses built for beauty along the coastline paid the price for that location in a frighten-



Runaway blaze terrorizes Oakland area

By Peter Blais

OAKLAND, Calif. — One golf course suffered major damage and several others barely escaped the intense flames that engulfed the hills west of the city in late October.

The 12th green, 14th tee and several fairways at Claremont Country Club were severely burned by falling embers, according to superintendent Randy Gai.

"We turned the irrigation system on in the early afternoon to stop fires from springing up in the more outlying fairways. It looks like a disease outbreak where the cinders landed. We'll have to re-sod some spots," Gai said.

At least 300 trees along the course and another eight to 10 acres of wilderness area belonging to the Jim Smith-designed facility were also destroyed during the blaze, Gai added.

The course closed from Oct. 22-28, re-opening the front nine on the 28th and the back nine a day later. No temporary greens or tees were needed.

Gai's crew re-seeded and re-sodded the damaged turf areas and removed 200 trees, including many stately redwoods and cypress, while the course was closed.

"We'll leave some of the scarred trees in and see what happens. But I expect we'll lose at least 300," the superintendent said.

The cost, mostly labor, to remove burned trees and repair damaged turf could run as much as \$200,000, Gai

Continued on page 15

EPA puts pesticide laws in states' hands

From staff reports

The federal government will soon give more responsibility to the states to manage pesticides that could contaminate ground water.

The Environmental Protection Agency's recently

released Pesticides and Ground Water Strategy gives states a major role tailoring programs to meet local conditions to avoid adverse effects on human health and the environment.

"Current findings do not

indicate a public health problem," noted EPA De-puty Administrator Henry Habicht. "However, monitoring studies, including EPA's National Pesticide Survey of Drinking Water

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Graphic by Leigh Kaposo

Hurricane Grace racks Atlantic Coast with wind, waves

Continued from page 1

houses out to sea. Seawater covered much of his course, depositing a tri-hull catamaran on the 16th fairway and assorted debris along the course's shoreline.

Dick Barry saw the storm from two viewpoints — as a member of his local fire department and part-time grounds employee at Cohasset (Mass.) Golf Club.

"It was like a war zone here," he said. "There are natural gas leaks everywhere, soldiers keeping watch over homes..."

Superintendent Rich Caughey at Hatherly Country Club in North Scituate, Mass., perhaps told the most symbolic tale of the hurricane.

"There is a house on our course," he said. A week after the storm, the house was still sitting in a marshland.

Elsewhere, coastal courses in Maryland, New Jersey and Long Island's Hamptons region were hit hard by the storm.

Jim Gilligan, superintendent at Richmond County Country Club at inland Belle Meade, N.J., said: "We were spared. The Jersey shore took a beating, but it was strictly a coastal storm."

Most superintendents on all the affected courses reported that their major task was cleaning up debris. Many said heavy rains helped flush the salt water through the turf, neutralizing the salt water. Others recorded no rain whatsoever.

"The best blessing was that no one was killed in the storm," Cowan said, relating how many homes and camps were washed into the ocean. "In the 25 years I've been here we've never had a storm this bad. Erosion went 30, 40 feet above sea level."

"The ocean came in with such fury it took out a portion of the 7th tee, went over the tee into the fairway, and flooded the fairway. Boats, docks, anything that wasn't tied down broke loose. We have lumber, chairs, propane tanks, all sorts of things on our shoreline."



A catamaran takes up residence on a fairway at Eastward Ho Country Club on Massachusetts' Cape Cod.

Photo courtesy of George Cowan, Eastward Ho

Although one tee was torn apart and two greens were dangerously eroded, repairs at Eastward Ho are "in the distant future," Cowan said. "We can't do anything about it, yet. We've been in the permitting process since 1989 trying to get permission to build a seawall to prevent this from happening in Northeasters or tidal surges. Now it's happened."

Eastward Ho still must get permits from a number of federal, state and town agencies, Cowan said.

The major loss?

The elevated green on the signature 15th hole (once declared by *Golfdom* magazine "one of the prettiest holes in the country") was undermined by erosion.

"Erosion is so close to the playing surface I don't want the liability of someone getting hurt," Cowan said, adding that golfers are playing a 14-

hole course.

Cowan's crew had to pump water off the course for four days and, despite a four-inch rain, may still have to spread gypsum to neutralize the salt, he said.

Caughey saw 10 feet of water submerge much of Hatherly Country Club, which has ocean on two sides and marsh on the other two.

"Three holes were completely covered and five others were two-thirds under water for several hours," Caughey said.

He figures one major task next year will be digging out and refilling Hatherly's bunkers.

Caughey felt the three inches of rain that fell flushed the salt past the root zone. "We're lucky it didn't occur at a stressful time of year for the turf," he said.

While waiting to get on their wet

course for a "massive cleanup," Caughey's six-man crew used the club's two backhoes to clear area roads—which were three feet deep in sand — so residents in North Scituate and Minot could get to their homes.

Then, a week of work faced them at the course.

Courses along the South Shore of Cape Cod mainly faced cleanup from windblown debris.

Superintendent Curtis Niven at Duxbury (Mass.) Yacht and Country Club said: "We had a lot of wind that knocked down limbs. But our only water was on the 10th fairway."

And Charles Passios, whose Hyannisport Club suffered heavy damage from Hurricane Bob, said rains from Grace actually helped his course. The area has had a drought since Aug. 19 when Bob hit, and the turf welcomed rain to

flush the salt out of the turf, he said.

On Long Island, superintendents John Carlone and Richard McGuinness, both near Kennedy International Airport in Queens, saw Hurricane Grace submerge their courses.

Carlone's Middle Bay Country Club in Oceanside was closed for two days after six- to 10-foot tides from the hurricane submerged fairways on six holes. The greens and tees, all elevated, remained above water.

Carlone said two things saved the day, and his turf: the tide receded quickly — four hours — and he irrigated at 20-minute cycles.

He reported: "West Hampton got blasted pretty good. Maidstone had one tee flooded. All South Shore courses did the same as we did — irrigating in cycles. Also, the winds were high and there was a lot of debris on courses."

McGuinness, from the Woodmere (N.Y.) Club, had to stop play for four days on his Robert Trent Jones-designed layout.

Woodmere is so close to sea level that it "has trouble at moontide," McGuinness said. Luckily, Grace brought little wind and no rain — just high tide, he said.

When the hurricane struck, the 17th and 18th greens were underwater for 36 hours. "But we turned on the irrigation to flush them out — one hour on, one hour off."

It worked.

Rehoboth Beach (Del.) Country Club assistant superintendent Ed Brown said high tides flooded about 80 percent of his course, all fairway. The greens and tees are elevated.

"The bay surged over tide gates and bulkheads and onto the course. It stayed flooded for two days and drained by itself," Brown said.

He said crews have applied gypsum in the recent past, so they did not need to apply it again. "We irrigated heavily as soon as it started to dry," which proved sufficient, he said.

Oakland fire frightens area courses

Continued from page 1

estimated. The figure could have gone much higher, especially if the flames had reached the clubhouse. Fortunately, the building sits on the extreme southwest corner of the property while the fire bore down from the northeast.

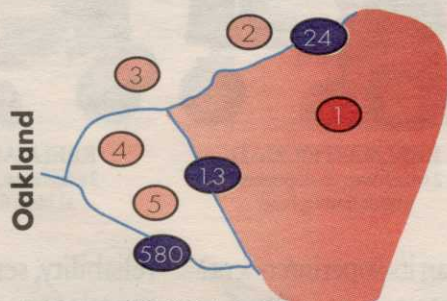
"The course acted like a giant fire break," Gai said.

Gai said 15 to 18 members were among the 3,300 people who lost their homes in the blaze, which caused an estimated \$1.5 billion damage.

While the fire stopped about 1-1/2 miles short of nearby Montclair Golf Course, the blaze has severely affected business at the par-3 facility.

"Many of the people who play here lived in those homes," said owner Pillim Lee. "We were the closest public golf facility, so we'll feel a big impact."

Smoke was visible over the ridge separating Orinda Country Club from the inferno, although flames never reached the course, said assistant pro Bob Tomasini.



- 1) Moraga CC; 2) Orinda CC;
- 3) Tilden Park GC; 4) Claremont CC;
- 5) Monclair GC.

Dark circles are route numbers.

"Helicopters used our lake to get water to fight the fire," he said. "They made 18 trips with those 500-gallon buckets."

Flames licked the edges of Moraga Country Club, but stayed west of the course.

"We could see flames behind the 13th green," said Director of Golf John Lundahl. "If the wind had been blowing directly across from the west, we would have been heavily damaged."



Claremont Country Club's trees got scorched and its fairways burned by hot debris.

Snow buries Midwest courses

Continued from page 1

tion as the snow settles and temperature drops. *Poa annua*, which is common at Northland, will be particularly susceptible to rupturing because it lacks the natural resilience to dehydration that bentgrass possesses, he said.

The Minneapolis area, which has enjoyed several consecutive mild winters, was caught short by the storm. The snow began falling mid-day Thursday (Oct. 31), and continued all day Friday before tapering off Saturday afternoon.

"This is my 10th full season here and I've never seen anything like this so early. I've asked neighbors, who have been here even longer, and they say this is the worst," said Chris Hague of Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn., site of the 1991 U.S. Open.

"Many people hadn't blown out their irrigation systems," he said. "They're bleeding the heads through two to three feet of snow. The ground didn't have a chance to freeze, though, so they should be able to pull it off."

Hague devoted three crew members exclusively to removing snow from greens and tees so he could administer a final snow mold fungicide treatment.

"You couldn't get down your winter protection in time," Hague said. "People are going to have to put down granular applications instead of spraying. It's a real mess."

Keith Scott at Oak Ridge Country Club in nearby Hopkins is also moving snow from tees and greens, hoping to get down a second snow mold fungicide application.

"By removing the snow this week we should be fine," he said in early November. "The fairways could have a few rough spots next spring. Otherwise, we should be OK."

Minneapolis-area superintendents who use snow covers were unable to get them down in time, Hague said. "But with this much snow for insulation, we won't need covers as long as the weather stays cold. We're better off if it stays like this (15 degrees the day he was contacted) than having the snow melt and freeze again later."

The ground's failure to freeze before the storm could prove a silver lining. If it does not freeze all winter, the snowmelt will drain through the soil quicker next spring. That would require less clean-up than water running off frozen ground, Hague said.

Missed snow mold applications, canceled fall projects (bunker renovations, tree clearing) and being able to lay off seasonal employees earlier than usual also saved on the maintenance budget, he added.

But those projects will have to be done next spring, Hague noted. Repairing snow mold-damaged turf could prove costly. And irrigation lines that weren't drained before the storm could show leaks once the system is restarted.

"Overall, there are more negatives than positives," Hague said.

SPARED THE WORST

Areas south and west of Minneapolis fared better.

Brainerd, located west and roughly midway between Minneapolis and Duluth, received 10 to 12 inches of snow, according to Scott Hoffmann, superintendent at Madens Pine Beach Golf Course.

"There was a path through the central part of the state that didn't get hit as bad," he said. "We got our fungicide treatments down two weeks earlier, so we were pretty lucky. We didn't have a chance for

dormant fertilizer applications or a final top dressing. We'll be pretty busy come spring."

Eau Claire, Wis., seemed to lie along the same light-snow path.

"We got five or six inches," said John Granholt, superintendent at Eau Claire Golf & Country Club. "We hadn't done any dormant fertilizing or snow mold applications. But we'll get it done, even if we have to blow off the snow and spray them on."

Freezing rain and five inches of snow pelted Rochester) Golf &



Assistant superintendent Todd Carlson, right, and crew member Jim Schleuger show the depth of their problems at Northland Country Club in Duluth, Minn.

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Faubel proves prevention theory versus gypsy moths

By Peter Blais

Homeowners near Saginaw (Mich.) Country Club are about to get a dose of the old adage concerning an ounce of prevention being worth a pound of cure.

Over the past seven years, superintendent Gerald Faubel closely monitored the consistent build-up of gypsy moths, which can defoliate an entire golf course in a few weeks.

"We reached a threshold last fall that, if we allowed the population to keep growing, we were going to

suffer significant damage," said the immediate past president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

Faubel decided an aerial spraying of BT was in order. He informed the owners of the 200 neighboring home sites this spring that the application was about to take place and invited them to participate.

They declined. "People usually wait until fecal matter is actually falling from the trees before they'll do anything. By then, it's too late," Faubel said.

"It's difficult to get homeowners to agree to spray. A single person can stop a spraying project, even if all his neighbors want it.

"It usually takes a county-wide mandate. But, by that time, the situation is often too bad to save the trees."

Saginaw Country Club is isolated enough that it did not need its neighbors' approval.

Faubel said he received no negative reaction after informing neighbors the application would go ahead. In fact, many were out with

cameras at 5:30 a.m. the day the plane swooped over the golf course, he added.

"We got excellent control of the moths within a few days," Faubel said. "We knocked the population back to the point where we won't have to spray next year and probably for a few years after that.

"By monitoring the population closely, you can alleviate most problems with a single pesticide application. We'll keep monitoring. We're willing to suffer some damage, but not wholesale devastation.

When the population reaches a critical level again, we'll treat it.

"We save money by not having to treat yearly and also make the trees healthier. It shows that a true integrated pest management approach can work."

And what of Saginaw Country Club's neighbors?

Studies of the gypsy moth larval population already show that trees at many home sites will suffer significant damage next spring, according to Faubel.

"It's a shame," he said.

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Snowstorm

Continued from page 15

Country Club, in southeastern Minnesota.

"It's strange. We usually get a lot more snow than they do up there," said assistant superintendent Jeff Anderson.

Anderson was shoveling off the snow so the sun could melt the underlying ice, allowing a final snow mold fungicide application. Power outages, fallen trees and downed branches were major problems.

"We lost three full trees, including a big willow, and a lot of large branches," Anderson reported.

Sioux Falls, S.D., and Omaha, Neb., roughly marked the western edge of the storm, which tracked from south to north.

"We just got the lines blown out the morning the storm hit," said Tom Jansa, assistant pro at Elmwood Golf Course in Sioux Falls, recipient of a dozen inches of early-season snow.

"It wasn't as good of a job as we would have done if we could have waited a little longer," he said. "We also moved up the snow mold application and got it done that same morning. The course closes Nov. 1. So, we basically lost just one afternoon's worth of play."

Omaha got three inches of ice, followed by eight inches of snow and 40-mile-per-hour winds, according to Omaha Country Club assistant superintendent Joe Adams.

The course received less than 24 hours notice of the storm's arrival and had no time to blow out the irrigation system or apply fall fertilizers and fungicides.

"We usually don't have to do those things for another three or four weeks," Adams said during the first week of November. "We've been digging up drains and bleeding the sprinkler heads. We've had to chip through ice to get at them.

"The ground is still soft, so we should not have any cracked pipes. The ice insulated everything."

The storm tracked as far east as Dubuque, Iowa, on the Illinois border.

"We got 1-1/2 inches. It's stopped us from getting a few things done," said Jim Burton of Dubuque Golf & Country Club.

"My wife is in the landscaping business. She's got \$3,000 worth of perennials sitting in the garage that she wanted to plant on the course and other places."