

[REPORTER'S **NOTEBOOK**]

Great White North

Our intrepid globetrotting editor at large Bruce R. Williams recently attended the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association's Fall Field Day in Osoyoos, British Columbia. Members met in the Okanagan Valley for several days of education, networking and golf.

Here are tidbits from his reporter's notebook:

- For those that have never visited the Okanagan Valley it is a beautiful place. The drive south from Kelowna airport takes one through a valley rich in agriculture – apricots, cherries, peaches, pears, plums and apples – but surrounded by desert. A dozen or more golf courses can be found close to Highway 97 as it winds down from Kelowna to Osoyoos.
- Osoyoos is the only desert in all of Canada and is known for its warm climate and warm water in the local lake.
- Sonora Dunes Golf Course – which held a 9-hole tournament – is a desert-style course built in a very natural setting. It is nestled among the rolling desert hills and lush vineyards of Osoyoos.
- Sonora Dunes had holes at a variety of distances. Six of the holes were Par 4's that varied in length from 245 yds. to 365 yds. Add a couple of Par 3's at 108 and 139 yds. along with the only Par 5 at 482 yds. and you have a fun and enjoyable track to play. Fairways were wide enough to place your tee shot and large greens were very receptive to mid and short range iron shots.
- The desert was not forgiving should you hit an errant shot wide of the rough. The course was in excellent condition and hats off to the staff for providing such a great track. A great time was had by the full field of 72 participants. Winners of the two-ball event were Bert McFadden, the superintendent at Georgian Bay Golf Club, and Peter Bondy, superintendent at Furry Creek Golf and Country Club.
- The main event was held on Sept. 17th at the NK'MIP Canyon Desert Golf Course. NK'MIP is Okanagan for "bottomland" and refers to the north end of Lake Osoyoos where the river meets the lake. This course is a short 20-minute drive from Spirit Ridge and in the town of Oliver. The course offered a striking blend of natural contrasts divided into the desert-dominated Canyon Nine and the laid-back Grove Nine. The layout includes a vineyard, sage and stone vistas and the glorious mountains in the background. Host superintendent Ken Bruniski had the course in tournament condition for his peers.



TURF SHARK

Just when you thought it was safe to go back onto the course... there's a shark on the grass. At least, that's what happened at San Juan Hills Golf Club when a 2-foot leopard shark landed at the 12th tee, dropped from the clear blue sky.

A course marshal found the wounded shark – it had small puncture wounds in its body – and took it back to the clubhouse, according to Melissa McCormack, director of golf operations. Golfers were clear of the area when the small shark was carried from the water by a bird and was dropped over the course.

They kept the shark in a bucket to take it back to the ocean, where it swam off, probably eager to forget the afternoon it spent outside the water.

From THE FEED

Hurricane Sandy came knocking on New Jersey's door Oct. 29 and carved a deadly swath into the east coast, upended millions of lives through the week. We at the GCI Intergalactic HQ hope everyone took the proper precautions getting ready for this storm and remained safe and were another story.

Photos of flooding and damage were showing up on Twitter as superintendents watched the storm plow through - from a distance.

Ryan Howard, superintendent at Winters Run Golf Club in Bel Air, Md., kept us all updated on course damage, including some heavy flooding.

Ryan Howard, @TWRyanHoward

Winters Run creek about to breach. Won't be long before 5 holes are snorkeling.



4 hours ago. This bridge becomes a dam if trees fall. Go easy #sandy.

Got antsy and drove back to work and now almost home. Dickey ride. Fortunately course holding well so far. Creek has breached but minor.

5.25" caught in rain gauge so far since this morning. But it's coming down sideways. Not sure how to quantify that. Big thing is water looked clear of debris.

Driving into the club ranks right up there on one of the dumbest things I have done. #thelistislong

Very grateful to say we were spared by #sandy with minor tree damage and flooding. Winters Run GC will be closed for a few days to dry out.

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Fuzzy forecast

Winter can have a profound impact on turf condition, so it's no surprise that many superintendents want to know what Mother Nature is cooking up for Winter 2012-13. The National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recently released what can only be described as a fuzzy best guess for the winter.

"The science behind seasonal prediction is in its infancy," said Mike Halpert, deputy director of NOAA's Climate Prediction Center, in an official statement. "Despite recent advances, this year's winter outlook has been difficult."

So many climate influences - such as El Nino, El Nina and the North Atlantic Oscillation - play a role in what winter will turn out to be. NOAA climatologists say there is considerable uncertainty with the specific temperature and precipitation forecasts for Winter 2012-13.

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As of mid October, here's what NOAA thinks might happen:

- Above-average warmth is expected this winter from the Rockies to the Plains states.
- States from the Great Lakes to the Northeast and Southeast have equal chances of seeing below, above or near-average temperatures this winter.
- Below-average precipitation in the northwestern US and the Upper Midwest.
- Above-average precipitation is expected from eastern Texas eastward along the Gulf Coast to central Georgia and northern Florida.
- The High Plains, Southwest, Northeast, Ohio Valley and Mid-Atlantic have equal chances of seeing below, above or near-average precipitation.



Marathon men

Golfers usually want to get as many rounds in as they can before the end of the season, but two brothers-in-law playing at Pinewood Golf Course took it to the extreme. Erik Haselius and Dave Butts clocked seven full rounds in one day at the public 9-hole course.

They played 63 holes each to take advantage of an all-you-can-golf deal on a Sunday, starting at 9:15 a.m. and only wrapping up because the sun went down. A quick stop for food was their only break from swinging for the tee. Thanks to the deal, the marathon only cost them \$39 total, including green fee and cart rental - a final cost of about 31 cents per hole to each of them.

