

But it was restricted to the rough because Hallbrook has zoysia fairways. Superintendents in the area with cool-season fairways faced a much more dire situation.

The most significant effect Morgan and the superintendents at Myrtle Beach National saw was a severe thinning of the bentgrass on the greens. Being located in South Carolina, there's also Bermudagrass in the greens, he said. With the heat, and thinning of the bent, Bermudagrass tends to take over.

Humidity was also an issue. Although the area gets about 45 inches of rain a year, last year they had 9 inches in June alone.

### Why so hot?

So what made the summer of 2010 so hot?

The simple answer is a big blue H that shows up on weather maps every summer off the east coast of the U.S. Called the Bermuda High, Arndt says it's a persistent feature that can be expected every summer. The clockwise circulation around this high-pressure area brings hot and humid air to the Southeast.

The Bermuda High isn't always the same size or power, however, and in 2010 it dominated the eastern seaboard, essentially bringing Florida weather to places like Philadelphia.

A final blow was the transition during the summer of 2010 from an El Niño to a La Niña, which, Arndt said, typically loads the dice for warmer weather on the east coast.

"La Niña wasn't the biggest factor," he said. "The bully that threw the punch was the Bermuda High."

Because it was situated abnormally west, it delivered warm, humid conditions as far inland as the Midwest, leading to record heat and blocking smaller storm systems from entering the regions. It was the hottest June on record for several states along the mid-Atlantic Coast as well as Louisiana.

According to the National Climatic Data Center, it was the eighth warm-

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est June and August on record for the country. Hundreds of maximum high and minimum high temperatures were broken, contributing to the third and the fifth warmest July on record for the Southeast and Northeast climate regions, respectively. For June through August, 12 states had record warmth, while only two experienced average temperatures below normal. Overall, it was the fourth warmest summer on record for the continental U.S. with an average temperature of 1.9 degrees F (1.0 degrees C) above the 20th century average.

### Proactive for 2011

Looking forward, Anderson said he won't fundamentally change the way he manages his courses. HVCC is noted for playing fast and firm, which Anderson has worked on since he took over at Huntingdon Valley in 1986.

"We've already done some tree work to improve air flow to greens that were pocketed. We hadn't had any problems until last year, but we've opened them up a bit to improve circulation," Anderson said.

For superintendents whose primary


source of water is surface-fed ponds, hot weather can bring a double whammy. When air and soil temperatures are both high, using a syringe cycle or hand watering can offer some relief, unless the irrigation water is 90 degrees. That's the situation faced by both Anderson and Morgan at Myrtle Beach National.

At HVCC, the irrigation system pumps out of a stream-fed pond that is supplemented by well water. The well delivers cooler, cleaner water into the irrigation system's intake box, improving the quality and lowering the temperature during the heat of summer. Anderson said he's already put in a new well pump to help ensure quality water, and will test monthly to make sure it is being delivered.

In addition, the course has added a pair of portable fans to help with circulation where needed.

In the end, Anderson said, the stress his greens faced resulted in some positive changes for the future. Like many courses with long-established greens, his have more than one strain of grass. And, like many superintendents at older courses, Anderson has faith in the old turf.


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**"It was relentless. There were plenty of record highs, but it was the generally high daytime temperatures combined with record minimums that were unusual."**

— **DEKE ARNDT**,  
CHIEF OF CLIMATE  
MONITORING, NATIONAL  
CLIMATIC DATA CENTER

PHOTO COURTESY: MAX MORGAN



The greens at the River Course in Pawleys Island, S.C., are bentgrass, and some of Max Morgan's hardest to maintain.

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## How's the Weather?

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"While we were closed, the heat removed *Poa annua*, and some weaker bents, leaving us with 90- to 100-percent bent putting surfaces.

"The recovery was quite remarkable. Our strains of lateral-growing bent filled in very quickly. A turf consultant friend of mine said, 'It's unbelievable how quickly you recovered.'"

Morgan is converting the greens at the River Club to Champion Bermuda after the resort's busy spring season is over.

"We already converted three courses in 2005 and 2006, and had very good luck with them," he said. The River Club already has a number of fans, including six 54-inchers and one 30-inch.

Bickel says his plans for 2011 at Hallbrook Country Club are pretty simple. "Because our root system suffered such

a decline, our main concern is getting it back to where it was. We are in recovery mode, and probably will be until May. We are usually aggressive with mowing heights in the spring, but we're going to hold off until I'm confident that the root systems are stronger."

And he's going to add a couple of fans. "With cool summers in 2008 and 2009 it looked like we weren't going to need them. Now we're going to put a fan on one more green and add one to one of the six that already have them."

### Forecast for 2011

So is this the new normal?

Deke Arndt said simply, "I am not a



**The wet, cool summer in 2009 — including this 3-inch deluge in June — didn't help matters at Hallbrook CC in Leawood, Kan.**

forecaster, but the current state of the science suggests that seasons like this will be less unusual in a warming world."

The folks at the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center are forecasters, and they do make long-range predictions.

Mike Halpert, Deputy Director of NOAA's Climate Prediction Center, said La Niña is expected to weaken and could end by summer of 2011. However, the CPC is still forecasting an increased chance of above-average summer temperatures in the southeast and much of the west.

Regarding climate change and whether the general warming is going to have an effect on a specific area, Halpert said, "Our experience has shown us that climate models aren't particularly effective for projecting the regional representation of climate change."

As far as 2011 weather goes, Halpert said the best any long-range forecast can do is describe a shift in the probabilities toward above or below average conditions. When forecasters see no shift in the probabilities, the forecast says there's an equal chance of either.

So, while the southeast and west are most likely looking at a warmer summer, for much of the country, there's no definitive answer. So superintendents will continue to do what they've always done when it comes to weather — prepare for the worst, and hope for the best. ■

*Contributing editor Ken Mowm lives in Topeka, Kan.*

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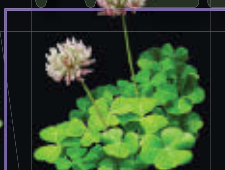
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**That internship in 1990 certainly paid off: Smith now finds himself as the head superintendent at Canterbury Golf Club.**

There are a lot of turfbooks out there, but the one on how to take over as superintendent after your predecessor just reeled off almost 50 years as the boss hasn't been written yet.

And why would it be? To be a superintendent at the same golf club for almost 50 years is unheard of in this day and age.

But Terry Bonar did it, and Canterbury Golf Club in Beachwood, Ohio, is better off because of his longevity.

After Bonar retired last year, the club had a decision to make: hire a qualified internal candidate or one of the hundreds of qualified external candidates.

The club chose Ed Smith, former first as-

sistant to Bonar. He had one clear advantage over the other candidates: he knew the course like the back of his hand. He should. He's been there 20 years.

Smith was named superintendent last year and hopes to keep that position for 20 more years.

"I want to make Canterbury the best golf course in Cleveland," he says. "We're making little improvements every day. It's the detail work that will set us apart from the rest of the clubs in the area.

"Club president Tony Asher gave Terry [Bonar] an honorary membership, and I hope they can do the same for me in 20 or 30 years," he adds.

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I want to make  
Canterbury  
the best  
golf course  
in Cleveland.”

— ED SMITH

*Continued from page 27*

### **A long-awaited transition**

After working at Beechmont Country Club in Orange, Ohio, Smith attended Agricultural Technical Institute in Wooster, Ohio. While at ATI, he completed an internship at Canterbury in 1990. He's been there since. He worked on the crew and progressed to second assistant, then worked his way up to first assistant in 1998.

When Smith first started working at Canterbury, he thought he'd work there for a short period of time and move on. When he became the second assistant, he talked to Bonar about taking over someday, and Bonar said it was a possibility. When Smith became the first assistant, he thought about moving on, yet he also knew Bonar would eventually retire.

In June of 2009, before the club started the search for Bonar's replacement, Smith told the green chairman that he was interested in the job. He also told him about some changes he'd like to make to the course. In September, the club opened the position locally and received more than 130 résumés nationally. The club's general manager, Eric Rhodes, CCM, told Smith he was his choice to replace Bonar.

“Ed Smith was the guy,” Rhodes says. “That's where we were, but membership and the search committee said we owed it to ourselves to see what's out there. Ed was always the frontrunner. He was groomed for that position. He was the heir apparent. Ed showed

loyalty all those years by staying at Canterbury, and I'm glad Canterbury turned around and showed him the same loyalty.”

“If they brought someone else in, it could have been a catastrophe because he wouldn't have known the course,” Smith says. “I, on the other hand, know all the problem areas, and I get along with the members.”

Bonar knew the people on the search committee and spoke with them about choosing his successor.

“They were happy with me and wanted the golf course in the same condition,” Bonar says. “I told them Ed deserves a shot at least. He earned it. I couldn't see any reason to hire from the outside. I was confident in him.”

Bonar says Smith was the hardest working assistant he's ever worked with.

“I had no doubt he could do the job, except getting through the first year is tough,” Bonar says. “It was tough for me. It was an adjustment for me and my wife. It takes more hours. From May through September, I worked seven days a week. I don't know how he's doing it now, but I know the golf course is in good shape because I play about once a week.”

Smith hired a second assistant, Brian Hugel, who worked at Shaker Height Country Club down the road and Boulder Creek Golf Club in Streetsboro, Ohio.

The transition from first assistant to superintendent has been smooth for Smith, he says, adding that he's learned a lot by doing more managerial work, such as hiring, budgeting,





**“My main goal is to help Ed succeed,” Chris Sulyok, first assistant, says.**

pricing and project planning. But he still mows, rolls and fixes spots on greens.

Smith, who is in charge of all the grounds (140 acres), enjoys the early mornings when there are no golfers on the course.

“It’s beautiful,” he says. “It’s the best office in the world. You can hear the animals, the birds. It’s great to be with nature.”

Smith likes dealing with employee issues the least.

“You have to be an accountant, turf guy and psychologist,” he says. “Sometime the whining and complaining by crewmembers are a bit much.”

### Supporting cast

Longevity is commonplace among the maintenance staff at Canterbury. Chris Sulyok, Smith’s first assistant, has been at the club 17 years and was named the Northern Ohio GCSA’s assistant superintendent of the year for 2010, the first year for the award. One crewmember has been there 36 years. The horticulturist has been there 26 years. Other crewmembers have been there 19 years and 14 years. Some part-timers have been there six and seven years.

“They enjoy the work,” Smith says. “They like it here. They know the course.”

Sulyok, Smith’s right-hand man, makes his job easy.

“Without him, the job would be a lot tougher,” Smith says. “Chris takes care of all the irrigation and the mechanical stuff. I get him involved as much as I can because I want his opinion. He has a lot of great ideas for the course, such as bunker renovations and building retaining walls. He does everything. He’s a smart guy. I need to surround myself with good people like Chris to be successful.”

Sulyok was promoted to second assistant in ’05, and when Smith got the superintendent job, he promoted Sulyok to first assistant. As second assistant, he’s more involved with overseeing the course.

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He's confident about what he's doing. He's done a stellar job. He's earned his right to do what he's doing."

— TERRY BONAR

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"My main goal is to help Ed succeed," Sulyok says.

Sulyok enjoys making the course as pristine as the crew can make it, and every day they do it all over again.

"Membership notices the detail work, and it makes you feel good they notice the small stuff," he says.

In addition to working closely with Smith, Sulyok helps the crew understand how important they are and helps them see the big picture because they sometimes get caught up in daily tasks.

"I've worked with Ed for a long time," he says. "I see what he doesn't and vice versa. We fit well together. I can't imagine someone else running the course."

#### The first year is hardest

Even though 2010 was a difficult agronomic year brought on by harsh weather, Smith has

done very well, Bonar says.

"He's confident about what he's doing," Bonar says. "He's done a stellar job. He's earned his right to do what he's doing."

Rhodes says Smith has succeeded in his first year because he's been a hands-on superintendent.

"A year in, we couldn't be happier. If you played golf here, you wouldn't know there was a transition," Rhodes says. "Conditions didn't drop off one bit. It was a seamless transition."

Smith has come through the first year with flying colors, Bonar says.

"Members ask me how Ed is doing, and I ask them, 'How do you think he's doing?' And they say, 'Great,'" Bonar says. "He's lived up to all the expectations." ■

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*John Walsh is a contributing editor for Golfdom. He resides in Cleveland.*

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