



# A Few Observations and A Few Awards

By Monroe S. Miller

For as poorly as 1993 began, it sure ended up nicely. The excellent last half balanced the lousy first half, and resulted in a season that was average at worst and pretty darn good in some places.

Regardless of how the year was for any individual golf course and golf course superintendent, few weren't pleased with the awesome season the Wisconsin Badgers football team had. What fun! It looks as though the basketball team is moving up fast, too. Both programs might be establishing the kind of tradition hockey has had for decades. Factor in success in golf, volleyball, soccer, crew, and volleyball, and you've got the best overall athletic department in the whole U.S.A. What a difference Athletic Director (and Maple Bluff CC green committee member) Pat Richter has made. He is the same guy who was kind enough to visit the WTA Field Day as a noontime speaker a few years ago. And let's fondly remember that Barry Alvarez visited the WTA Winter Conference as a speaker a couple of years ago.

Before 1993 fades completely into our memory, whether it was good or bad, here are a few awards to help remember it a bit:

**Best Advice:** "Quit complaining. If you are going to complain, go complain to your mother. Complaining here will not get the job done." C.D. Eberhardt, to golf course staff members.

**Best Selective Herbicide for 1993:** Ol' Man Winter of '92/'93. Selectively removed least winter hardy grasses from a lot of Wisconsin golf courses. Free.

**Best Golf Story:** I personally loved reading the report about the one-armed man in Sweden who scored a hole-in-one, despite his handicap.

**Best Annual Flower:** 'Red Hot Sally' Salvia had a great season. Any flower, salvia or otherwise, with a name like that is destined for success.

**Worst Tree:** Sorry, but the Skyline Honeylocust wins here. Weak wooded,

susceptible to insect damage and some disease, this ornamental was overplanted by many, including yours truly.

**Best Tool:** If you haven't seen Joe Check's invention, a turf Prism, take a look at it. You can use it and never wonder again if your reel mowers are giving a clean cut or if all three units on a triplex greensmower are cutting at the same height.

**Best Editorial (Non-GRASS ROOTS):** 1st place goes to John Hughes for his editorial in the June 1993 (Vol. 5, No. 3) issue of *WISCONSIN GOLF* entitled "In Praise of Our Superintendents".

2nd place goes to Terry McIver's editorial in the March 1993 (Vol.32, No. 3) issue of *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT* entitled "A Lesson From the President—Always Keep Your Promises."

**Best Event in the WGCSA Year:** Rod Johnson's selection to receive the DSA. Deserving recipient.

The new year brought a new Executive Director/CEO to the GCSAA. We'll likely get a chance to meet him at the conference in Dallas. He is Steve Mona.

We certainly wish him well. He, no doubt, has a big job ahead of him.

Frankly, given the size, complexity and recent problems of the GCSAA, his experience looks a little thin. I would have thought the task at hand would have dictated someone with more experience and with more time in a larger organization than the Georgia Golf Association.

We have to trust the directors and officers in their judgment. Let's hope Mona was selected on WHAT he knows and not on WHO he knows.

That this question has been asked so often by so many shows how strained the GCSAA's credibility is these days.

I never want to jinx any of us operating a golf course, but realities are all around us.

And one winter reality is the threat of ice storms, one of the reasons Pat Norton—don't miss his column in this issue—doesn't like winter.

I'll never forget the ice storm of March 4, 1976. We were cleaning up tree damage from that disaster for a full year.

Some information that may be helpful in species selection has come from the University of Illinois.

Based on previous studies and on an analysis of urban tree damage from a February 1990 storm in Urbana, university and city foresters have classified a number of commonly planted landscape trees with respect to their susceptibility to ice storm damage.

I edited out those species not commonly or normally planted or found in our state.

**SUSCEPTIBLE:** Siberian elm, American elm, Honeylocust, Bradford pear, American linden, Black cherry, Black locust, Silver maple, Pin oak and Green ash.

**INTERMEDIATE:** White ash, Northern red oak, Eastern white pine, Bur oak and Sugar maple.

**RESISTANT:** Eastern hemlock, Arborvitae, Norway maple, Catalpas, Ginkgo, White oak, Swamp white oak, Littleleaf linden, Silver, Kentucky coffee-tree, Black walnut and Ironwood.

The study reiterated that in general trees with conical form and low branch surface area tend to suffer the least damage from ice storms. There appears to be no obvious correlations between the densities, elastic properties or failure loadings of a particular tree species and the amount of damage likely to be sustained in an ice storm.

When the final weekly growing report was issued by the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service last year, it showed what an oddball weather year it was.

The south central part of Wisconsin received 38.7 inches of rain during the "growing season" (which starts April 1) compared to a normal five year average of 25.6 inches. Southwestern Wisconsin averaged 39.5 inches vs. 27.3 inches and southwest Wisconsin averaged 32.4 inches compared to a normal 25.2.

Central Wisconsin was closest to normal with 35.3 inches. That area usually gets 28.6 inches.

One factor really puts a twist on the numbers: we received practically NO rain this fall. The obvious conclusion is what we all know—the rain came in a few short months.

Rainfall may have been out of whack, but temperatures were not. Measured in growing-degree days, it

was 2,690 this year and 2,704 in that elusive normal year. Those with good memories will remember a cold spring, brief hot spells in the summer and a warm autumn.

There is no correlation between a dry fall and winter (or spring) moisture. So relax for a couple more months.

For those of you (or your staff) who harvest golf balls from water hazards or pick up abandoned balls in rough areas, there is news from Vancouver, British Columbia that might interest you.

A Canadian judge has ruled that "lost" golf balls aren't lost forever; they still belong to the owner, even when you find them.

The B.C. provincial court judge recently acquitted a teenager of stealing golf balls from a Vancouver area golf course, even though police caught him at night near the course's man-made lakes, wearing a wet suit and carrying a bucket of golf balls.

The judge ruled that the kid wasn't stealing from the golf course because

only one of the recovered golf balls actually belonged to the course! The rest still were the property of the players who had hit them into the pond.

The ruling obviously could affect what is a significant source of revenue for some golf shops and some golf courses. And what about the lonely golf ball one of our employees finds in a deep rough, way out of play—is it his?

The defendant in the case will get around the ruling by attaching a rider to its greens fees which would require golfers to transfer ownership of lost balls to the golf course.

The only positive from the judge's ruling was that he gave the golf course back its one ball—a red striped range ball!

By the time this issue gets to you we will be on the verge of the Rose Bowl and the WTA EXPO. Here's hoping we toast a victory for both. ♣

## Spending too much time in the rough?



### Hanley's of Sun Prairie will get you back on the course fast with the Cushman 6150 Wing Rotary Mower.

The Cushman 6150 can mow at 7 m.p.h. with 1, 2, or 3 decks. It can cut up to 7 acres per hour with up to 10' 7" cutting width. Zero turning and fold up wings gives it maneuverability. It offers four wheel drive performance, and is easy to operate and service. The 14 m.p.h. transport speed will get you on and off the job fast.

*Get in and out of the rough fast - Call Hanley's.*

**Hanley**

Power Equipment & Turf Sales  
641 W. Main Street • Sun Prairie, WI 53590  
(608) 837-5111 • (608) 257-7815  
Toll Free 1-800-279-1422

  
**CUSHMAN**  
Driven to be the best.