



I Quit Wearing My Boots Today

By Tony Rzadzki
Bristlecone Pines Golf Course

Editor's Note: Not only is Tony Rzadzki building a new golf course as a new resident of Wisconsin, he's also a new member of the WGCSA and a new, regular contributor to THE GRASS ROOTS. Give him a warm welcome!

There is something about all of us. There is, whether you choose to believe it or not, a spiritual aura that surrounds each of us. I truly believe this and can honestly state as fact that things have happened to me this year that will justify my statements. And today something that had been reoccurring for the last month happened again! IT RAINED! I don't want you to get the impression that I am some kind of spiritualist, but an innate feeling toward nature has overcome me this year. I have been humbled once again.

I left Illinois to come to 'God's Country'. I came to build and maintain a top notch golf course in 'Lake Country', a beautiful part of Wisconsin that I and my family truly enjoy. I really looked forward to my new position, and I was anxious to see new land forms unfold. To my dismay, Mother Nature has thwarted my every effort. I think I spent the whole month of May slogging around in mud and drafting ideas for my maintenance facility about a hundred times.

June and July. How can you beat weather like this for growing in a golf course. What a gravy train couple of months for golf course construction. I never saw so much dust in my life. A tank truck loaded with water soaked down the haul roads 12 hours a day. Within minutes of his passing the dust was flying again.

Some time in that two month span our architect, Scott Miller, paid us his bimonthly visit. He usually spends two and a half days, making changes, staking trees, and flagging grass lines for seeding. Scott Miller is from Arizona. But when 106 degree tem-

perature hits and the THI is 120, Mother Nature can bring the heartiest soul to his knees. I was crawling.

I was rolling right along and had four holes seeded and under my care by August 5th. Though I started getting edgy that week and a sneaky suspicion began to grow about me and inside my stomach. I remember talking to a couple of the construction workers about this date eight years ago when I was growing in Cantigny Golf back in Illinois. I should have kept my mouth shut. On August 9th, four and a half inches of rain devastated our golf course. Almost to the date, eight years ago Cantigny was deluged with fourteen inches of rain in one day! Call it a coincidence, call it dejavue. That native spirit was howling around that day, just as she was eight years ago.

One of the owners, the project manager and I spent the afternoon dodging lightning bolts, flash floods, and assessing the damage as it ran out under our feet. But something else happened that day that has been happening less than weekly ever since. I started to take notice of this and thought that maybe I could try to fight this nemesis on her terms. Hmmm.

We all know of course that once the soil gets as super saturated as it is that the weather pattern can only get worse. And it did. God's Country became Mother Nature's sauna. As August temperatures reached the upper 80's to low 90's thunderheads grew and so did the rainfall. Every time Wadsworth, the construction company, would rework and complete a hole, at least .90 inches of rain would devastate it with washouts. A part from that, on August 18th our 'Parade of Homes' was to begin and the roads needed to be spotless. After spending two days and nights shoveling, sweeping, and

fire hosing the mud off of the street for our pre-opening of the homes on Friday night; Mother Nature dumped another two and a half inches on us the following morning.

Since that time, the weather pattern has persisted, so has the disease populations, especially pythium. I consider myself fortunate in one respect. Yes, I now have gorges running through all of my fairways and wiers constructed to withstand a hundred year rain event completely destroyed, but I have no *Poa annua* loss problems as many of you do. I guess in that respect we are all even...we're all suffering.

Wadsworth has been running like a freight train on a straightaway. We've decided to continue construction and make repairs later. They have successfully seeded two and a half holes since the last rain and hope to complete three holes a week for the remainder of the month.

Last night the weather forecast called for cooler temperatures and a cold front to pass through bringing some rain. This morning, September 7th, I woke up to a much cooler atmosphere, much like Wisconsin should be in the fall. Great I thought, my favorite boots are dry and I'll slip them on and go to work. We only got .15 inches and it was slightly drizzling. By mid morning my boots had gotten totally saturated...again, with an additional .40 inch down pour.

I do believe that there is a spirit within and about all of us. Call me superstitious if you will, every old baseball player that I know is, but the one thing that I had noticed about a month before has happened again! Every time that I have worn my boots this season it has rained. My spirit is now telling me to take off those !@\$#am boots, but keep that lucky buckeye in your pocket! ♣