



In The Bleak Midwinter

By Monroe S. Miller

The contrast between the seasons in Wisconsin couldn't be more dramatic than it is these days. It seems such a short time ago when we were in the throws of 95°/95% summer weather; now, in the deepest days of winter, it does not seem possible we could experience such a hot and humid extreme.

Although I gripe as much as anybody about the cold winters here, the contrast it affords is a good bit of the appeal of Wisconsin's four season climate. The reference points are cornerstones in the lives of golf course superintendents, despite their extremes in some years.

Any normal person, however, would hope we never have a year like 1995 and its wild extremes in weather. Here it is in a nutshell.

The earliest opening ever (at our course, anyway) was followed by a dreadful and terrible spring. It was cold and cloudy and rainy. We even had snow in our town in early April. May was decent, but June and July and August were very hot—the hottest ever.

And it was either very wet or very dry—there seemed no inbetween in Wisconsin. At one point in late June, 70% of the state's soils were dry. On the eastern one-third of the state, 95% were moisture short in mid-July.

Our autumn was acceptable until November arrived, and it turned out to be one of our worst for golf on record and in memory. Many of us had a difficult time getting snowmold fungicides applied. We were spoiled after a mild fall season last year. November 1995 was the seventh coldest on record with our average temperatures running almost seven degrees below normal.

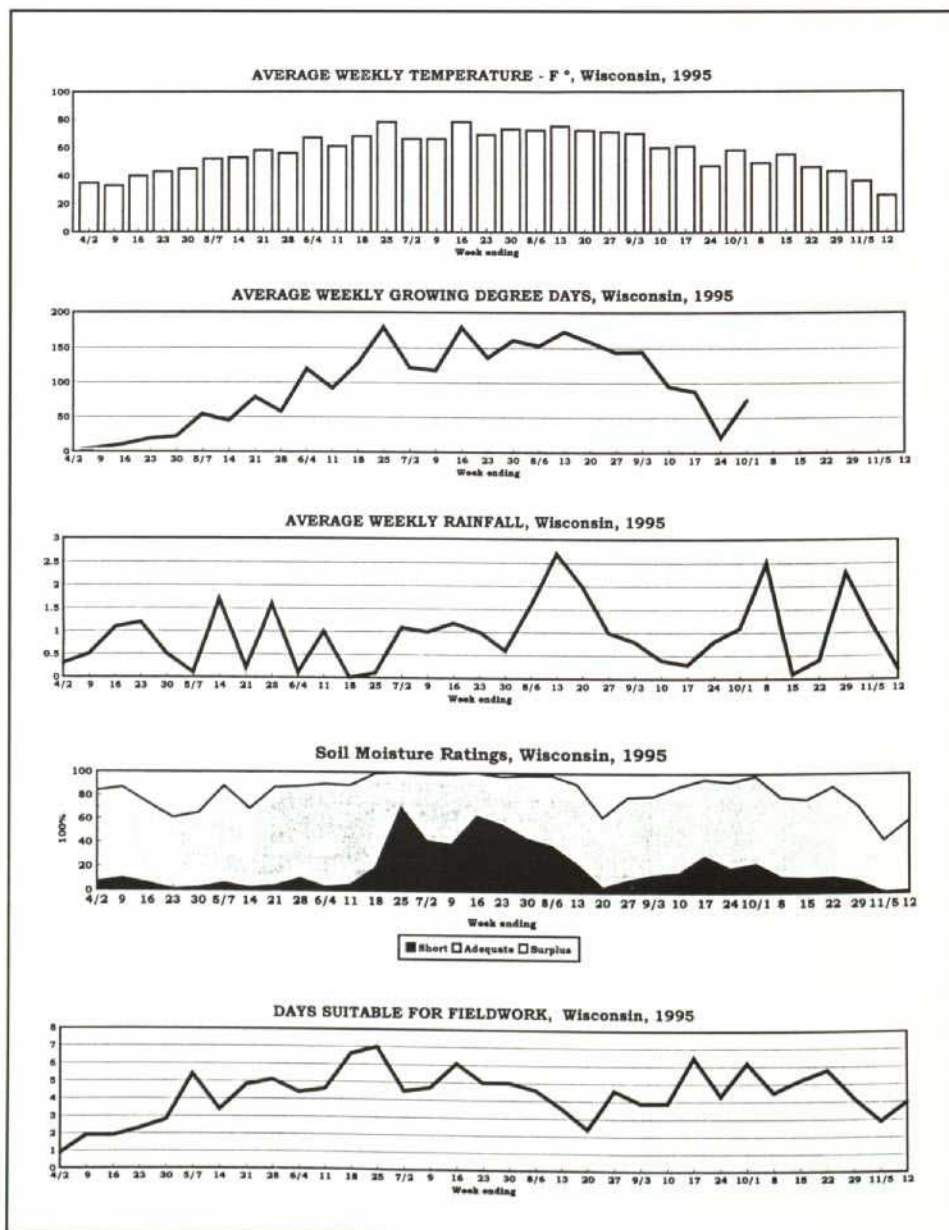
Actually, November was more winter-like than autumn-like. Normally, our town gets 41 inches of snow in the winter season; we had 20 inches of it in the eleventh month this year. There was no golf played in November. Two record snowfalls were set in November—November 10th and November 27th. The snow on the 27th

was preceded by freezing rain—more to worry about.

Although December was closer to normal, the rain (which quickly froze) on December 3 was unwelcome on our area golf courses. Fortunately, we had a white Christmas, and the outlook for the remainder of the winter is for average snow and normal temperatures. I hope the forecasters are right.

Following are some interesting statistics concerning the 1995 season for you to interpret and digest on these cold, bleak midwinter days.

Why was I not surprised, after the miserable weather of 1995, that the sores on my left ear and on my nose that weren't healing were just what I feared—skin cancer. The dermatolo-



MONTHLY RAINFALL: 1995 GROWING SEASON AND NORMAL

District	April 1/		May 1/		June 1/		July 1/		August 1/		September 1/	
	1995	Normal	1995	Normal	1995	Normal	1995	Normal	1995	Normal	1995	Normal
	Inches											
NW	3.40	2.43	3.10	3.65	3.10	4.39	5.00	4.20	8.50	4.58	4.10	3.54
NC	2.80	2.48	3.90	3.64	1.70	4.16	4.50	4.04	8.70	4.56	2.70	3.80
NE	3.10	2.82	3.60	3.50	1.50	3.77	3.30	3.62	9.50	3.91	1.80	3.67
WC	3.60	2.90	3.50	3.88	2.50	4.42	3.30	4.03	8.50	4.11	2.50	3.58
C	3.20	2.99	3.40	3.77	1.90	3.67	2.50	3.57	11.30	3.77	2.30	3.71
EC	2.50	2.88	3.30	3.13	1.50	3.33	1.80	3.38	6.80	3.33	1.70	3.23
SW	5.70	3.32	3.90	3.62	3.00	4.13	4.30	3.98	3.60	3.98	1.90	3.50
SC	5.10	3.24	4.90	3.21	2.40	3.93	3.40	3.93	7.60	3.84	2.10	3.44
SE	4.30	3.30	2.60	2.95	1.10	3.79	2.90	3.85	8.00	3.58	1.30	3.21
STATE	3.60	2.83	3.60	3.55	2.30	4.03	3.80	3.90	8.10	4.09	2.60	3.57

1/Preliminary estimates, 1995.

MONTHLY TEMPERATURES: 1995 GROWING SEASON AND NORMAL

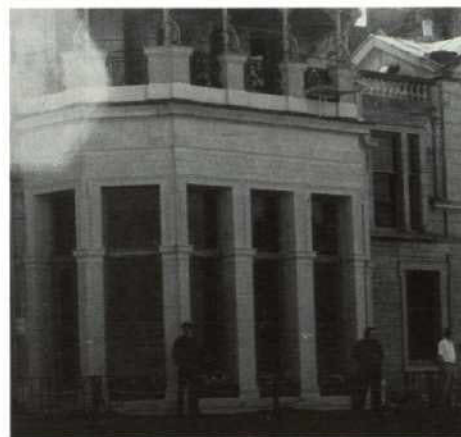
District	April 1/		May 1/		June 1/		July 1/		August 1/		September 1/	
	1995	Normal	1995	Normal	1995	Normal	1995	Normal	1995	Normal	1995	Normal
	Degrees Fahrenheit											
NW	36.8	42.3	52.5	54.3	65.6	63.3	68.8	68.5	68.8	66.3	54.8	57.2
NC	36.4	41.1	52.3	53.5	66.0	62.3	69.0	67.0	68.8	64.8	53.8	56.0
NE	36.2	42.1	52.3	54.2	64.8	63.3	68.5	68.0	68.0	65.8	52.8	57.2
WC	41.8	45.7	56.5	57.9	69.8	66.9	74.5	71.4	75.0	69.1	58.5	60.0
C	41.2	44.8	56.5	56.7	70.6	65.6	72.0	70.0	73.6	67.9	58.5	59.3
EC	40.8	43.7	56.5	54.7	70.4	64.2	74.3	69.7	74.6	68.4	58.5	60.4
SW	42.8	46.9	58.0	58.6	70.0	67.6	74.8	71.9	76.0	69.9	58.8	61.5
SC	42.4	47.0	57.3	58.5	70.4	67.6	75.0	71.9	76.0	69.9	58.3	61.9
SE	42.8	45.9	57.5	56.8	69.8	66.4	74.8	71.4	75.0	70.0	60.0	62.4
STATE	39.2	43.9	54.8	55.8	68.0	64.8	71.5	69.6	72.0	67.5	56.5	58.9

1/Preliminary estimates, 1995.

COMPARATIVE TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION DATA

District	Average Temperature						Total Precipitation					
	June - September						April - September					
	Normal	1991	1992	1993	1994 1/	1995 2/	Normal	1991	1992	1993	1994 1/	1995 2/
	Degrees Fahrenheit						Inches					
NW	63.9	64.9	60.5	61.4	64.1	64.5	22.8	29.8	19.3	24.0	23.1	27.2
NC	62.6	63.4	58.9	60.4	62.6	64.4	22.7	26.3	19.7	24.8	22.9	24.3
NE	63.7	63.6	59.5	61.4	63.4	63.5	21.3	23.8	19.9	26.4	22.5	22.8
WC	66.9	67.5	63.3	64.2	66.4	69.5	22.9	25.4	21.8	31.4	27.4	23.9
C	65.7	66.7	62.7	64.3	66.6	68.7	21.5	21.5	21.9	32.0	25.5	24.6
EC	65.7	66.9	62.2	64.1	65.8	69.5	19.3	18.6	17.0	25.9	19.5	17.6
SW	67.8	67.9	63.5	65.0	66.9	69.9	22.5	25.8	23.0	36.4	24.8	22.4
SC	67.9	68.2	64.0	65.8	67.4	69.9	21.6	21.3	20.1	33.6	23.0	25.5
SE	67.6	68.5	63.6	65.8	67.5	69.9	20.7	19.4	16.9	27.8	17.8	20.2
STATE	65.3	65.9	61.6	63.0	65.2	67.0	22.0	24.6	20.1	28.5	23.4	24.0

1/Revised. 2/Preliminary estimates, 1995.



It could pay big dividends in the years ahead.

Envy and jealousy are two of the absolutely worst emotions a human can experience, yet I felt them both when I received the accompanying photos from Steve Blendell. He went over to Scotland to watch the 1995 British Open! Since Old Tom was outside the Old Tom Morris Golf Shop, Steve had the photo taken, along with another outside the hotel at St. Andrews.

The third picture is a riot—the Garloch Golf Course/Beach/Cemetery car Park! As Steve said to me, "Golf clubs in Scotland are a little more informal than here!" Garloch is a small town in northwest Scotland, near the famous Inverene Botanical Gardens, 300 miles from St. Andrews!

It isn't difficult to figure what Steve will remember most about 1995.

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gist removed them with liquid nitrogen and insisted I make regular appointments to get checked. I will follow that advice.

My family has a history of skin cancer. My father and his father both had problems with the disease. My dad still does and probably always will. They both, like me, spent a lot of time outdoors. Farming required it of them. Couple that with a predisposition for it—genetics, no doubt—and my problem was predictable.

Awareness of the dangers of skin cancer as it relates to a golf course career has been with me a long time. Hats, long sleeve shirts and skin block (in recent years) are evidence of that awareness. Regular checkups are now on the list.

My advice, hardly new, is that all of you pay more "attention to prevention".



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Ed Devinger has had a burr under his saddle for a couple of years now, and it is about time I share it with you.

What has been aggravating the Turf Division Manager at Reinders is the State of Wisconsin Pesticide Registration Fee Schedule. For each product (pesticide) Ed sells, Reinders (and anyone else who sells the same products to us) must pay the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection from \$315 to \$3,050 in registration fees plus 1.3% for site remediation (ACCP—Ag Chemical Cleanup Program).

The idea or concept is okay; the charges are gross. It is the excessive cost that irritates Ed. For example,

twenty-two states charge from \$10 to \$95, twenty states charge from \$100 to \$175, two states charge from \$200 and two states charge \$300.

And, as usual with Wisconsin's rip-off attitude on fees and taxes, there we are, AT THE VERY TOP. THE HIGHEST. THE MOST.

We should be as mad as Ed; face it—we pay the bill, ultimately, in the price for the materials we purchase.

But it gets worse, lots worse. The ACCP was instituted for the purpose of making grants to clean up sites. For the first full year, \$1 million has been granted. By mid-1996 the fund will EXCEED \$10 MILLION! And you know how it goes with politicians and bureaucrats—if the money is there, they'll spend it, likely on something other than site cleanup.

It is an outrage. Faith is lost and trust is destroyed and credibility is out the window. Yet the fees go on, despite the surplus and despite the fact that no other state has fees as high as Wisconsin.

Minnesota's pesticide cleanup program contains a provision limiting their fund to \$5 million. When the cap is reached, there is a plan to cut surcharges in half. It only makes sense. We need to do the same in Wisconsin.

Illinois is another case. It would cost Reinders \$1,500 to register 30 popular crop protection products in that state. The cost to register the same 30 products in Wisconsin is \$1,200,000! Even though they don't have a cleanup program, the numbers seem even more out of whack by the difference in the

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corn crop size in the two states — 3.7 million acres for us and 11.6 million acres for Illinois!

It is no wonder Eddie is angry.

For those of us lucky enough to get to go, the thought of attending the GCSAA conference is exciting. It is only a month away, and the warm Florida weather will feel good. I'll confess I am a lot less excited this year because of the chapter affiliation proposal and by-law changes.

You know full well that the politics are done, the phone calls are made on this one and it is a done deal. So it will be up to us in March at our chapter meeting to decide if we are the kind of people willing to cleave the haves and the have-nots in Wisconsin. The principle is clear; the choice is simple. I know how I'm voting. I sure wish everything didn't come down to money for the GCSAA these days.

No wonder I'm feeling some deep melancholy and despair in these cold bleak days of midwinter. That old hymn, *In The Bleak Mid-Winter*, (one of my favorites at Christmas time), says the greatest gift in the bleak mid-winter is a pure heart. I wish the GCSAA officers and directors could see that. The days would be brighter and happier if they were not so interested in pushing aside those less prosperous and less fortunate colleagues among us. I don't care what they require for the organization they preside over, but I deeply resent it when they try to tell state chapters who they can have as members. It is wrong.

This could be a national conference worth forgetting. And I sure wouldn't want the legacy Gary Grigg and Bruce Williams are creating for themselves.

Attention has to be turned from that proposal to what we will do about it here. We aren't alone; other chapter members from around the country I have visited with feel the same way and there will be some creative solutions cropping up to deal with 100% requirement.

So my thoughts, out of necessity, turn to the great season the Packers

had, the fun games we are having again in the Field House with Dick Bennett and Sam Okey and the rest of the basketball Badgers, and the thought that opening day isn't all that far away. They keep attention from the discouraging activity in Lawrence.

Keep smiling.

The November 1995 issue of *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* reported on an extraordinary achievement for the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the UW Foundation. The UW-Madison raises more private money than any other public university in the country.

According to the magazine, Wisconsin's land grant university raised \$147.3 million in 1994 from private sources. That put it 27th on the list of the top 400 of charitable organizations.

The UW-Madison was the top public university, but seven private schools were higher on the list. Harvard was tops with \$289 million.

The WGCSA and a number of Wisconsin golf courses, like Westmoor CC and Stevens Point CC and Bulls Eye CC, contribute to the turfgrass industry and the WTA through the UW Foundation, so we are a part of this story.

The Big Ten did well on the public institution list. Wisconsin was first, Illinois was second, Michigan was fourth, Minnesota came in fifth, Indiana was seventh, Northwestern was ninth and Ohio State was tenth.

On Wisconsin!

Hats off to the USGA again! They have established an environmental program, "Wildlife Links," that represents golf's first comprehensive investigation of the game's relationship with wildlife and its habitat.

The Wildlife Links program will fund research, management and education projects needed to provide the game of golf with state-of-the-art information on wildlife management issues. The USGA plans to contribute \$100,000 annually for the next three years to fund the program. They have actively solicited additional funds from other golf organizations.

The GCSAA and the LPGA were the first in line to contribute to the program. Wildlife Links will be administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation of natural resources. Among its goals are species habitat protection, environmental education, public policy development, natural resource management habitat and ecosystem rehab and restoration, and leadership training for conservation professionals.

An advisory panel of experts has been formed to oversee implementation of the USGA program, and Jim Snow and Ron Dodson are on that panel.

The goal of the program is to protect and enhance the wildlife, fish and plant resources found on golf courses. It will provide golf course architects and managers with research information needed to improve and create habitat for wildlife. Among the issues that will receive priority will be determining how golf courses can be maintained as biologically productive sites for wildlife, providing solid recommendations that can be incorporated into long-term management strategies, and educating golfers and the general public about these issues.

Examination of individual golf courses within the context of their surrounding landscape will be a major focus of Wildlife Links. Obviously an urban golf course will require different strategies than a rural one, while desert courses present a much different landscape for wildlife than a wetlands course. Regardless of their climatic orientation, the loss or fragmentation of wildlife habitat and its effect on wildlife, especially birds, will be a major factor in research projects.

Look for two new publications as the first evidence of the Wildlife Links program. The first will provide guidance to golf course superintendents about how to enhance the golf course habitat for bird species. The second publication will be dedicated to wetland issues.

It seems to me we owe it to ourselves, our players, the USGA and the NFWF to actively participate in this exciting new program. 🍷