



# See You in September

By Mark Keinert



It seems it was just like yesterday when I made my annual trip into the pro shop to find my good friend Tim Marks, PGA Head Professional at the Bull's Eye Country Club. I was there to let him know that I was going to open the golf course when we could get the cups and flags into the greens.

The frost, almost at near record depths, was now gone. The playing surfaces would support the traffic of the fifty or so members who seemed to pace back and forth on the first tee daily, anxious for that first golf shot of the new season. Tim and I looked awkwardly at each other without uttering a single word. Only the frowns of our contemplating the upcoming season that was now upon us were expressed on our faces. After a brief but noticeable pause, Tim uttered the words "see you in September," words that so adequately capture the essence of the tiresome feelings of the long season to come.

We both looked at each other and laughed as we realized the fatiguing pace we would be working at as we entered the dawn of another golf season. As I remember, I know that my mind was reviewing the hellish year superintendents faced across the country in 1995. Would 1996 be the same? Would we see the record highs again, and dewpoints parked in the low 80's? Dry periods giving way to monsoonal rains? Disease lurking everywhere!

Thankfully and knock on wood, 1996 for many of us has been a real treat. For the first time in two winters, our two golf courses came through winter relatively unscathed. Here we go again. Ready, set, sprint! I can't wait for the first person to ask how come the greens are so slow for this time of year!

It is hard to believe that September is already upon us. For

the golf course superintendent, it is the season for renewal both mentally and physically from the exhaustive pace all golf course employees have been putting in for the benefit of the game. There are cool crisp nights followed by warm seasonal days. The torrid humidity leaves. You can't catch me with a tear in my eye! Our attention now can turn toward renovation, aerification, and those last minute fall beautification projects. We begin to deal with budgetary matters for the next year.

September is also the time of year that serves to bring us back to our senses. The urgency to get things done as we juggled maintenance routines in and around play schedules, shotguns and seemingly endless tournament matches isn't as apparent in September as it was back in mid-summer. Now the

weather is the principle reason for scheduling projects.

Can the hands of time be beaten? Work days start a little bit later as the days shorten. In fact, it is the first weekend after Labor Day that we roll back the starting times for both weekdays and weekends as it is just too dark on cloudy days to get started earlier. The crew starts dreaming of the "thirty pointer" as both bow and gun seasons are now simply a matter of weeks away. I can get away to attend Badger football games without the fear that the golf course will fall apart in a matter of a few hours. Those games become my payback to my family as they have had to put up with yet another summer of Saturdays and Sundays at work. Trips out to the course to make sure that everything

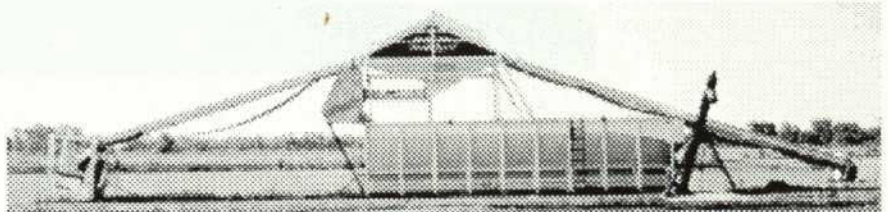
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is well or to make those last minute changes to the irrigation system are now not as frequent as they were just a few short weeks ago. Sundays are reserved for church and watching the Packers. This is truly the time of the year to catch our breath.

I'm always impressed with September days. The hint of the first frost is in the air. Heavy dew defines the fairways from the roughs in a brilliant silvery white cast against the deep blue skies above. The productivity of the veteran crew is always welcomed by me. The constant interruption of the new employee asking for directions is now replaced by the veterans whom know exactly what and how the work should be completed. I can now go about my business for almost half the day. In my case, anyhow, many golfers have had their fill of golf and have put away their

clubs for the season. Some pack up and head south; still others opt for the opportunity to gamebird hunt. With fewer players to contend with, fall aerification projects can be accomplished now without the usual hassle and pressure we seem to place upon ourselves to see if we can reopen the course once again in record time. These are the days that the membership seems a little bit friendlier. I'm sure that they too recognize that the season has but a few precious days left and that they should be appreciated for the opportunity that they present. Thank God for September!

As a subtle reminder, this year's Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium, will focus on "Trees, Shrubs and More." Dates for this years event are scheduled for early November. This year's event will be held at the Marriott Hotel, out on the west end of town.

This year's topic is an interesting one. I'm one to appreciate the value of the trees after being held hostage by oak wilt, bark beetles, anthracnose, weather related wind and drought damage. There hasn't been one tree species un-affected by damage on my golf course. Crews here at Bull's Eye have removed well over 2,000 trees in the eleven years that I have been employed here as golf course superintendent. I've gotten the stumps to prove it. I know that it is very demoralizing to travel around the state to see the large pockets of dead and dying trees. Sometimes entire stands of trees can be seen in a tragic state of decline with no hope for recovery. Can anyone tell what is wiping out the sumac? Maybe we will get the answers to that and other questions.

Until next time, kick back and enjoy the season. We've earned it. 🌿

