



# A Pretty Good Season

By **Monroe S. Miller**, Golf Course Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

For me, and I suspect for a lot of other Wisconsin golf course superintendents, autumn is like a long deep breath - a sigh of relief - drawn after the great intensity of the fading golf season. I can feel the stress beginning to leave me.

August can bring me some hot, humid days and with them brown patch and even pythium. But there is change in the air. Club championship rounds are underway; the junior players are wrapping up their season before the grade and high schools open their doors. Football players - high school and college - headed out at mid-month for practice, usually two-a-days. Those kids are suddenly grateful for a summer of hard work that got them into pretty good shape! Another wonderful field day at the Noer passes into history. The daily average high temperature is dropping a degree and a half each week, and the days are shorter. In fact, in September we lose 58 minutes of daylight. The light is distinctively different. There is sadness in the morning with the lack of bird-song, but August brings the intensi-

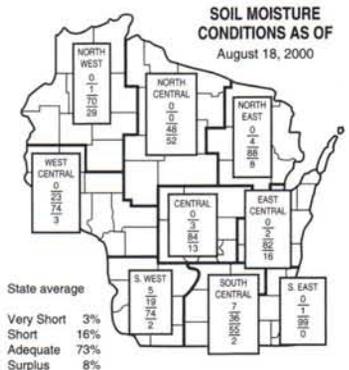
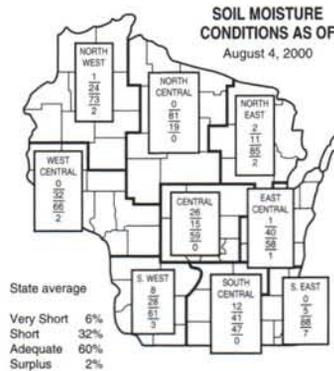
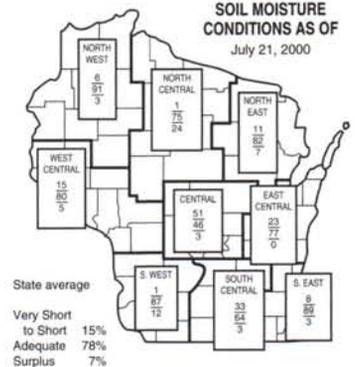
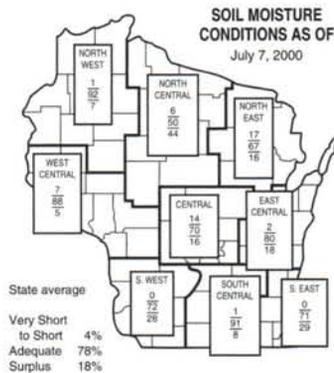
fied sound of crickets, especially at night when they play their familiar cadence of fall.

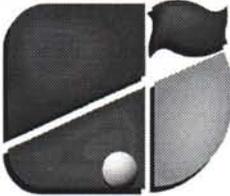
August smells different, too. It is a spicy smell, a mixture of ripeness and decay - apples and grass clippings and powdery mildew. Soon the dusty smell of dry leaves being mulched and of soil from aerified fairways will fill the air. In August this year we were treated to a Wisconsin Badgers football game at Camp Randall, sure fire evidence that fall is almost here.

I am ready; really, really ready.

The months of July and August were the chance for southern Wisconsin golf courses to dry out from the wet first half of the year. There were pockets of dry conditions, to be sure, but most of us received normal amounts of rain for the period. The normal or even cooler than normal temperatures seemed to keep diseases at bay for the most part, except for some persistent dollar spot on some courses.

A few more stats from Wisconsin Ag Statistics Service are shown here that allow you to track moisture conditions over the past two months.





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Chad Grimm and Mike Bogroff from my staff took our undergrad interns to the Merit Club to attend the Thursday competition of the 2000 US Women's Open. They arrived early and were stopped in their tracks when they saw a famous person. He waved, said "Hi, fellas!" and came over to visit with them. He had his own vehicle, and he had his secret service guard take a picture of him with the guys. Chad had enough composure to tell him he'd heard his wife speak at the GCSAA conference in Orlando.

The famous man was, as you can see, President George Bush!

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Jeff Porter like antiques. And he likes the PBS show *Antiques Roadshow*. When the show was in Milwaukee, I tuned in to see Jeff getting an on-air appraisal. The show was in Madison on August 27; on the front page of the Sunday Wisconsin State Journal, there he was - Jeff Porter. He clearly has a touch of the showman in him! The pic below is for you to see for yourself.



L-R: Phil Spitz, Chad Grimm, Nick Herbrand, President Bush, Aaron Goninen, Mike Bremmer, Paul Blumke and Mike Bogroff.

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The bold move by the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association to embrace the Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowships led to an exciting fund-raiser scheduled for October 10th at Whistling Straits. This event is one you'll want to support, either by participating yourself or by offering the opportunity to someone at your facility. It is a generous offer by Kohler; let's take advantage of it to the maximum.

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Lori Bocher got me thinking with her last article in *The Grass Roots*. She reflected on ten years of interviews and what they had meant to her.

I got to wondering exactly how many issues of this journal I have edited. It turns out that this is the one hundredth issue. In some ways it seems like I started yesterday; in other ways it seems like it could be the one thousandth issue.

It has been a lot of work, but it seems part of my (and Cheryl's) life. We plan family events around



Jeff Porter at the Antiques Roadshow in Madison.

the various deadlines and there aren't very many nights in a year when I am not doing something related to getting an issue ready.

But it has been rewarding, too. Mostly I treasure time with the great writers we have. They are, as a group, so unique, so interesting, so dedicated. The truly singular thing about *The Grass Roots* is that it is done through the goodwill of contributors; we don't pay.

I am not sure how many more issues I have in me. My family is nearly grown and the arrival of granddaughter Grace Kaster reminded me of so many other things I want to do that require time. So it is almost an issue-to-issue proposition.

But I do think I will sign up for next year.

Frank and Barb Rossi were in Madison in July to vacation and see family and friends. Coincidentally, Barbara's sister and her family live in our town, so maybe we will get to see them more often. The news in their family is that Danielle and Nicole will soon be joined by a brother or a sister!

Frank brought a lot to Wisconsin in his short few years at the UW - Madison; he is having a similar impact at Cornell. He'll always have a following in our state.

October is my favorite month, and it is right around the corner. Soon I'll put up my orange Halloween lights, tie corn stalk bundles to front porch posts, and purchase the biggest pumpkins I can find to set next to them.

The pace on the course is comfortable, the work days are of normal length, and the weather suits me best. Let us raise our glasses and toast a golf season well done!

