

The Summer Season Is In Full Swing

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

If there were a time of the year I wish I had a crystal ball to glimpse into and see what the future held, it would be for the months of July and August. July and August are full summer, full of great heat and humidity, even in northern states like Wisconsin. It would take a crystal ball; the medium to long range weather forecasts are still unreliable to the point of dubious value.

Will we have some decent rainfall in the next two months to make up for what we did not receive in June? Some parts of Wisconsin are extremely dry and catching up will require some serious rainy spells to return to normal levels of soil moisture. By late June the NWS said drought conditions existed in southeastern and south central Wisconsin, leaving metro Milwaukee with its fourth driest spring in history. Concerns about grass fires have heightened, but mosquitoes have

been non-existent because moisture has been nearly non-existent.

Will the weather continue hot and humid and bring on more plant diseases than we have already had to deal with? Will infections be such that they will bust more than a few budgets?

Will our levels of play be back, or will we still be lagging in rounds of golf or members?

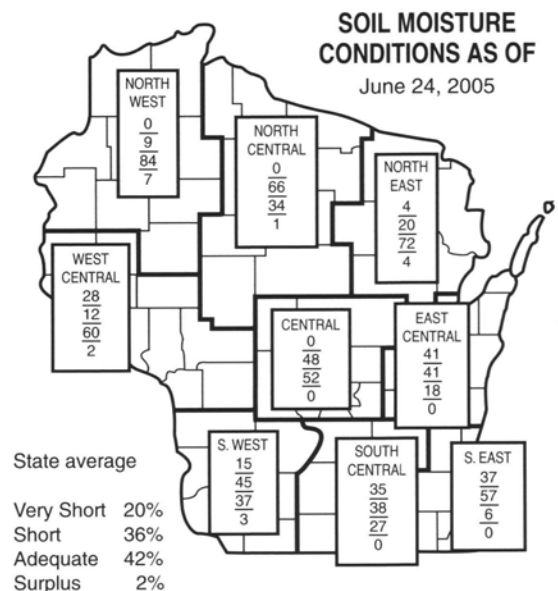
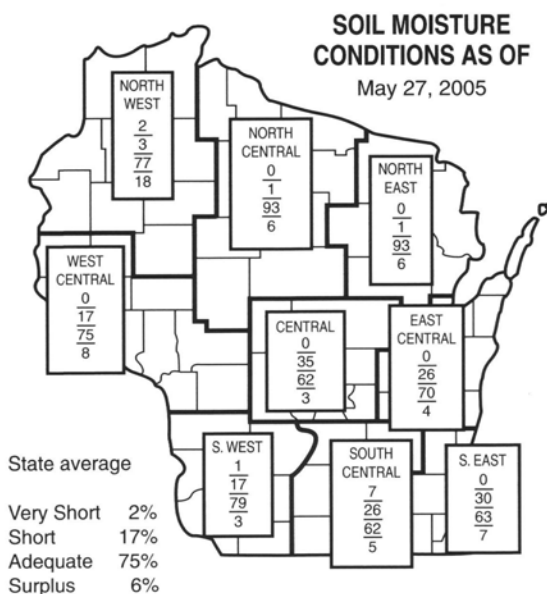
After a dreadful spring of working hard to bring many of our courses out of winter injury conditions to something close to normal, we sort of deserve some moderate weather in July and August. I wonder if we will get it...

July is a significant month for golf and for American history. The Fourth of July provides a huge golf weekend, maybe the biggest of the summer and possibly our most patriotic holiday. Calvin Coolidge was born on July 4th, and both

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died on the 4th, both in 1826. In 1832, "America" was sung for the first time, and in 1848 the cornerstone of the Washington Monument was laid.

July 15th has been celebrated in England for a long time as St. Swithin's Day. This holiday should interest weather sensitive people like golf course superintendents. According to an old belief, if it rains on St. Swithin's Day, there will be forty more rainy days following it. We need rain, but not like that predicted by a rainy St. Swithin's Day. Two days I could handle; forty days could force a guy to look for a different line of work.

The weather of recent weeks is highlighted here, thanks to the record and stat keepers at the Wisconsin Ag Statistic Service.



The gypsy moth quarantine has moved to two more Wisconsin counties. In mid-March, Juneau and Sauk counties officially joined 39 other Wisconsin counties considered to be infected with the gypsy moth.

The gypsy moth was first discovered in Wisconsin in the late 1960s, and the leading edge of the infestation has now reached the middle of the state. This seems proof that although it may be impossible to stop the moth's spread, efforts to slow it have been useful and a lot less damage has been done.

This isn't the only invasive species we are battling in Wisconsin. It has gotten serious enough that Gov. James Doyle declared June 2005 as "Invasive Species Awareness Month." The

State Legislature created the Governor's Council on Invasive Species to demonstrate its firm commitment to the invasive species problem.

Our friends at the Wisconsin Landscape Federation have changed their name to the Wisconsin Green Industry Federation. They felt the new name would more clearly reflect those under their umbrella. So, the WLF is now the WGIF!

AS soon as I receive each issue of CUTT - Cornell University Turfgrass Times - I sit down and read it front to back. It is an excellent journal, edited by our pal Dr. Frank Rossi.

The most recent issue came in

early June; when I finished reading Frank's article "A Preliminary Assessment of Putting Green Mowers" I felt as though I should put this issue of CUTT in an ice bucket to cool it off; it was hot!

The article reported on work at Cornell last year that measured the effect of mower type and cutting frequency on putting green performance, which included anthracnose incidence.

The first thing I thought was this is the kind of study seldom (if ever) done on golf turf. Secondly, the results were dramatic and very surprising.

Shortly after CUTT arrived, Golf Week Superintendent News arrived with a cover story about Dr. Rossi's work

Needless to say, one manufacturer is steamed and the other

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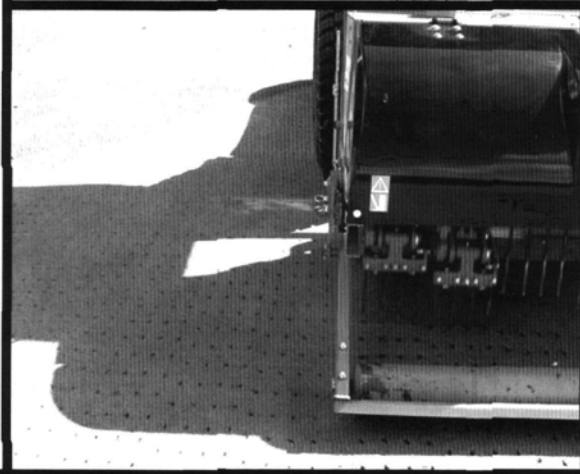
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says, "That's what we'd expect!"

The work goes on this summer; keep an eye open for reports on the results. Other investigators will probably initiate their own studies to see how the results shake out under conditions all around the country. Frank could be plowing new ground - engineers will have to consider how their designs could impact turf quality in ways other than they normally have. It is a fair bet that golf course superintendents will have a jeweler's eye on these data and factor such into buying decisions.

I am not worried about the grief that will likely be heaped on Frank's shoulders; his are good and wide.

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I am not sure what to say about the extreme honor given to me by the Wisconsin State Golf Association, other than it is a humbling experience. I believe that it is normal to wonder "Why Me?" and then have names and faces race through your mind, people you feel are far more qualified.

The Hall of Fame selection seems even more special because, as Gene Haas noted in his article, this may make it more likely other superintendents will

be similarly recognized for contributions to golf.

We all have to applaud the Hall of Fame Committee for open-mindedness in this choice. After



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all, it would seem fair to ask, "What did he win?" In my case that would only be some euchre games over the years and an occasional cribbage game (although Cheryl is a far better player).

This should also give hope to the grinders of the golf course business. Most projects require more sweat and toil than brains. I admit to not having very many original thoughts and ideas; hard work and persistence are my strengths, and they are available to any of us. In fact, determination seems to be a common trait among us.

If I understand correctly, there is to be some kind of an event and every WGCSA member will be invited. It is your honor, too.

It was one of those lucky things a person stumbles into in his life. I remember reading in *Golf Journal* a few years ago where Herbert Warren Wind was living. It was in Bedford, Massachusetts, across the interstate from where we were staying for a few days in Lexington.

I have most of HWW's books and I decided to haul them east on vacation and see if I could get him to autograph them.

The long and short of it is he did. And Cheryl and I enjoyed his company and correspondence after that.

Herb, who named the 11th, 12th and 13th holes at Augusta "Amen Corner," wrote for *The New Yorker* for over 25 years and was one of the first writers hired by *Sports Illustrated* when it was founded.

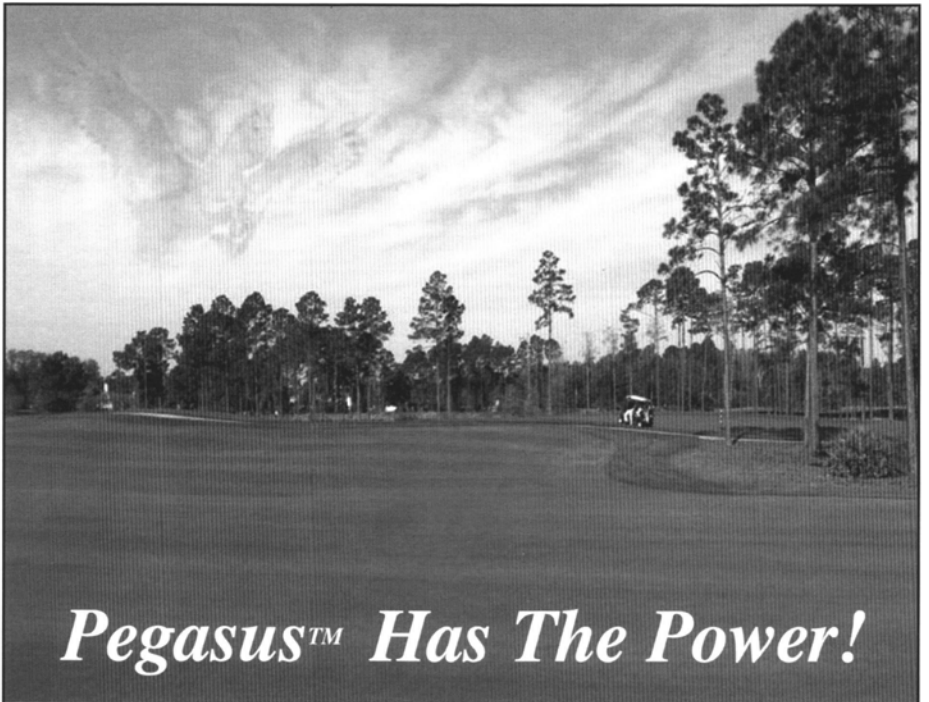
He was a kindly and bright guy and I am proud to have known him a little bit. His passing is a great loss to golf.

We are at the plateau of the golf season now. By the time the last few days of July roll around, the average daily high temperature of

83 degrees F. goes down a degree; Tom Harrison and I celebrate that day, albeit only by a phone call most years. The Packers will be training and the newspapers will be starting features about the

Badger football team and you just know the cooler days of autumn are near.

It has been a rough year in many respects so far; let us hope the worst is behind us. ♣



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