



# Rainouts!

By David Brandenburg, Golf Course Manager, Rolling Meadows Golf Course

For lack of better words, the weather is rotten! Not only is it wet and humid, golf courses stink like rotten grass! I am hopeful by the time your read this sunny skies will prevail and pushing up bunkers, grading cart paths and pumping water from low areas will be distant memories.

After 26 years in the business golfers still surprise me. I have had an ongoing conversation with two regular players at our club about the rough. The golf shop had alerted me they were complaining the rough was too long and thick, and no doubt it was but in their opinion we had raised the mowing height of our rough and were offering the longer rough on purpose.

They played on a particular Friday when it so happened the holes they were playing were freshly mowed. They thanked me profusely for lowering the height of our rough mowers to a normal height, and even though they understood we were mowing the rough higher for a tournament we hosted they appreciated the fact we lowered the height back to normal. I thanked them for expressing their gratitude and explained the rough has been the same height for years and we just are not able to keep it as trim as normal because it is growing so fast. They listened and nodded but I could tell they didn't really believe me. How can two 65 year olds not understand when it rains the grass grows faster? They have been playing golf their entire life!

The next time they played they were on holes that hadn't been mowed in two days so they complained to the golf shop that we

raised the height of the rough mowers again! Hopefully the dry weather is coming soon!

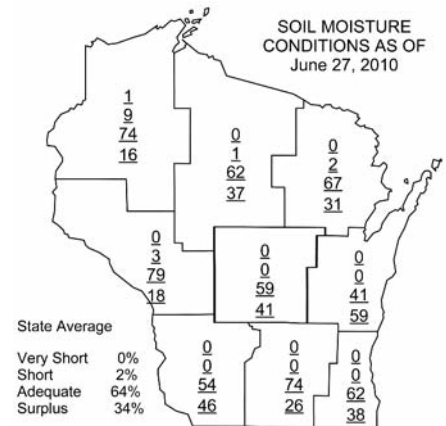
From the June 27 and July 25 US Department of Agriculture, National Agriculture Statistics Service Wisconsin Crop Progress Reports moisture map you can see the entire state has had ample rains and often too much rain over the past two months. Both months show only 2% of the state short on soil moisture and over 34% at a surplus of soil moisture.

If I had a dollar for every good intentioned golfer who said "at least you're saving money on irrigation water!" I would be a rich man. I just smile and say yes, even though the lost revenue from a single rain day equals half our total water pumping costs for the year.

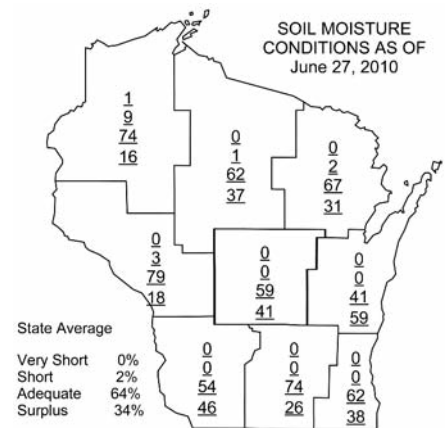
Wisconsinites have plenty of opportunities to watch some great amateur and professional golf. The State Amateur, Junior and Wisconsin State Open are free to all spectators, while GCSAA members gain complimentary entry into the PGA Championship and the BMW Championship.

- 92nd PGA Championship - August 9-15, Whistling Straits, Haven
- Wisconsin State Open - August 23-25, The Legend at Bristlecone, Hartland
- BMW Championship (Former Western Open) - September 9-12, Cog Hill Golf and Country Club, Lemont, IL

Our schedule of major events is growing with the announcement the US Open will be played at Erin Hills in 2017. Wisconsin is



Source: USDA, NASS, Wisconsin Field Office



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quickly becoming a national player in professional golf.

- 2010 PGA Championship, Whistling Straits, Sheboygan
- 2011 US Amateur Championship, Erin Hills GC, Erin
- 2012 US Women's Open Championship, Blackwolf Run, Kohler
- 2015 PGA Championship, Whistling Straits, Sheboygan
- 2017 US Open Championship, Erin Hills GC, Erin
- 2020 Ryder Cup, Whistling Straits, Sheboygan

The turf industry lost another long time leader and innovator with the passing of Egon Herrmann on June 22, 2010. Egon was a sod farmer with a 50 acres of land in New Berlin before selling the land and joining Kellogg Seed Company in 1972. Known as "Mr. Turf", Herrmann worked his way to the position of Executive Vice President for Kellogg and was well known for his work with Midwest golf courses and sod farms.

Egon was a believer in trade associations and was among the founders of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association and served as Vice President. He also was a member of the Wisconsin Sod Producers Association and served on the board for the Wisconsin Landscape Federation. (Now the WGIF, Wisconsin Green Industry Federation.)

Herrmann was a key member in the team that brought the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research Facility to fruition and was inducted into the WGIF Hall of Fame in 2001.



Egon Herrmann at his desk in this 1990 Grass Roots File Photo

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The spring and summer rains have provided for excellent growing conditions as turf managers have seen excessive growth and lush turf. The downside to warm and wet soils is the reduction in root growth especially on poa annua fairways, greens and tees.

A recent Noernet discussion on Summer Patch concluded with Paul Koch, Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab Manager discussing the challenge mature golf courses may have through August.

*There has been a lot of summer patch submitted to the lab, and there has also been a lot of annual bluegrass dying off due to poor rooting because of all the rains a few weeks ago and the constant warm nighttime lows. In some cases, there has been poor rooting and summer patch, a little bit of a double whammy. In either case, more frequent watering and some syringing will aid the plants in surviving conditions once moisture levels drop, but with how poor the rooting is on many of the samples coming in there might not be much of anything that can be done. I would recommend educating the board/GM on the possibility of losing a significant amount of Poa in the coming weeks.*

I passed Paul's information along with the same story from the USGA to our greens committee members as a precaution. A few of them think sprinklers are evil, and consider taking care of fairways as easy as a home lawn, and since they are not watering their home lawns we shouldn't have to water the fairways.

Are you waiting for your next issue of the USGA's Green Section Record? After 89 years of publication and 47 in its current bi-monthly format the USGA has abandoned the print version of this valuable golf course maintenance education source in favor of a online or e-

mailed newsletter. The upside of this cost savings move is the newsletters are received in a timely matter and offer regional updates from throughout the country when you need them.

If you are not already receiving the e-mails you can sign up for the free service at <http://gsportal.usga.org/> to join the list. As much as I miss my

paper copy of The Green Section Record I enjoy the timeliness of the e-mails.



The next four pages offer a highlight of the Wisconsin Golf Economy Summary Report. The project was supported by the WGCSA and shows that golf is a 1.2

billion dollar industry in the Badger State. The research was done by SRI International and commissioned by Golf 20/20 for the Wisconsin Golf Alliance.

The full report can be accessed at the chapter website or at [www.golf2020.com](http://www.golf2020.com).

## 7th Annual Wee One Golf Outing - Pine Hills Country Club Monday, September 20, 2009

Pine Hills Country Club • 4914 Superior Ave • Sheboygan, Wisconsin

### Agenda:

- ☛ 10 am - Registration - locker rooms and range open
- ☛ 11 am - Shotgun start with lunch served on the course
- ☛ 4 pm - Prizes and hors d'oeuvres reception (cash bar)

### Golf Format:

- ☛ Two person team - Selective Drive/Alternate Shot
- ☛ Tee assignments will be made in six-somes
- ☛ You may enter as two-some, four-some, or six-some

### Entry Details:

\* \$150 / Player

- ☛ Guests must be entered by member on same entry form and playing in same grouping.
- ☛ Enter early. Field is limited to first 162 PAID players. Last year the event was filled.

### Entry Fee Includes:

- ☛ Great Golf Prizes
- ☛ On course refreshments
- ☛ Lunch on the course - Taco Stand and Sheboygan Brat Stand
- ☛ Heavy hors d'oeuvres immediately following golf with cash bar reception

**Entry Deadline Wednesday, September 15.**

## Coming Events

**August 9 Monday, Oneida Golf and CC, Green Bay**

Host - Mark Storby

**September 20, Monday, Wee One Fundraiser Pine Hills C.C. Sheboygan**

Host - Rod Johnson

**October 4 WTA Fundraiser for the Fellowship, Blackhawk Country Club, Madison**

Host - Chad Grimm

**October 8 & 9, Couples Weekend, Saddle Ridge GC, Portage**

Host - Seth Brogen

**Nov 16-17, Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium, Kohler**