

Droughty Optimism

By **Jake Schneider**, Assistant Golf Course Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

Greetings from the Sahara Desert! My apologies to my fans (Mom, Dad, and occasionally my wife) for my absence from the last issue. From June until present time, I have been busy finding water for my camel. And, in my time away from my two-humped friend, a few hours were also spent battling Mother Nature and her very, very, very dry humor.

Indeed, 2012 will be a year that is referenced for decades, and it's making 1988 seem like a tame, little pussy cat. Personally, this is especially true since I wasn't quite so concerned with the weather at 5 years old. As of mid-September, Madison has received approximately 1.2 less inches of rain in 2012 when compared to 1988, and if the forecast holds true, this discrepancy will likely increase substantially. To make things even more interesting, we've hit the 90-degree mark 39 times this year. It got to the point that I was actually hoping for two more 90-degree days because the Madison-area record stands at 40 days. But, alas, the cool temperatures have arrived, and the painful memories of the summer that was are already beginning to fade.

Aside from substantially increasing my heat tolerance (85 degrees started to feel cool), I was able to glean a few positives from the year, and they are as follows:

Disease? What Disease?

Never would I have imagined that pythium would hardly be a concern with the conditions that we experienced, but despite relatively little protection, we saw approximately four individual infection centers throughout the year. Yes, it does turn out that diseases do in fact need moisture to develop, and aside from the obvious lack of precipitation, we very rarely had any dew. Looking back on it, we were undoubtedly more fortunate than those in the northern half of the state who had to deal with the heat, rain, and the associated diseases.

No Footprints

Oh, there was enough moisture-deficient footprinting to go around, but those nice, green footprints that are surrounded by burnt leaf blades were conspicuously missing from the tees and fairways. Wisconsin's unofficial state bird, the mosquito, very rarely took flight in the


southern part of the state, and it was unusual to spend evenings outside without serving as a buffet for the blood-sucking pests. I almost started to miss the little guys and may come to appreciate the green footprints if and when they return in 2013. They will return in 2013...

Putting the Work in Workout

This was the year that I was going to sustain my running regimen throughout the summer. Then, July arrived, and it didn't leave until the middle of August. Despite a steady stream of member-supplied Gatorades and ice cream, my dainty frame dropped a few pounds during my exercise hiatus. Why the Biggest Loser doesn't have contestants handwatering fairways in 95-degree heat is beyond me.

Fast and Firm...

...hit it in the rough.

I hope that you, your staff, and your course survived the golf season to forget and enjoying the much cooler offseason shouldn't be an issue. 



JOHN DEERE
LANDSCAPES

Agronomic
Sales

Northern Wisconsin

Steve Wasser
920-362-1809

Southern Wisconsin

Rob Wasser
262-206-0775