



By Bill Roberts

The consensus around the State of Wisconsin appears to be that 1984, true to the earlier prediction of the USGA's STAN ZONTEK, has been that "good year that usually follows the bad." Although droughty conditions have existed in some parts of the State, WGCSA members have once again responded by providing outstanding playing conditions overall. Play is up according to all reports and Stan characterizes the situation as a "marvelous year for golf courses with a minimal loss of grass."

While problems still exist (witness the continued decline of C-15 bent, several "new" species of "root rot" fungi, apparent Pythium problems in sand cultures, et cetera), Superintendents are responding to the challenges evidenced in 1983 by making good use of "excellent growing conditions and effectively spending the capital dollars which are now returning to the golf course." Likewise, increased proficiency in turf problem identification has made our operations more cost-effective than ever according to Mr. Zontek.

Although "riding high on a one for one" streak, Stan wouldn't commit to a "pre-early-early" prediction for 1985 but did remark, in hindsight, that the Golf Course Superintendent "deserved a good year and got it." Take a bow, fellow WGCSA members.

GENE HAAS, Executive Director of the Wisconsin State Golf Association, commenting on his organization's success in 1984, remarked that this season has been a "busy, active, record-setting year." With well over 1400 members playing in WSGA events throughout the State, Gene and his staff have provided services to a record number 200 member clubs encompassing some 40,000 Wisconsin golfers.

As Wisconsin golfers have become more knowledgeable relative to handicap, rules, course rating, course measurement, competitions, et cetera, the WSGA has become more visible and the results are exemplified by fully two-thirds of Wisconsin golf facilities maintaining membership in WSGA.

Gene stated that the close working relationship the WSGA and Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents have developed over the years has continued to mature. Contestants and members of host clubs for WSGA events have been most gratified by the playing conditions provided by WGCSA members in 1984. Take another bow, gentlemen.

Kettle Moraine Golf Club's DEWEY LAAK has been watching play continue to increase this season following the trend of the last five years. In addition to keeping up with the daily demands on his golf course, he has found time to initiate rebuilding of his practice area which has included the moving of approximately 4,000 yards of soil in order to increase the teeing area. Also included in the project is the installation of target greens.

Dewey, further, has been consulting on and assisting with the construction of a new privately-owned golf facility in his area and reports good progress toward completion.

Meanwhile, Brillion, Wisconsin's Deer Run Country Club's ELWOOD HUENERBERG has completed rebuilding his second green and is busy finishing up the installation of automatic irrigation around his putting surfaces as the second phase of a 3 year project. Elwood notes that he is experiencing "the best play ever with the fewest turf problems to date."

Racine Country Club's SKIP WILLMS has been busy playing host to numerous "STATE" and club events this season including the WSGA Amateur. Skip has decided to complete the conversion to triplex fairway mowing after extensive evaluation and has also been busy planning and preparing for some tee renovation and practice green construction this fall. Additionally, he will continue to implement his tree planting program and will be "picking up a low spots with drainage" after installing in excess of five miles of tile in his initial 3 years at Racine Country Club.

JIM BRADY, Golf Course Superintendent at Alpine Valley Resort, along with others in the southern half of the State, has been seeking some "relief from irrigation" in the form of rain while "surviving the concerts." With only 4 events to go, including Elton John, Rod Stewart and Crosby, Stills & Nash, Jim has managed to maintain his golf course for the ever increasing amount of play at his fine facility and plans some tee rebuilding and bunker renovation this fall.

Kenosha South Hills Country Club's TOM JENSEN also reports a dry year but with his turf holding up well under plenty of pressure from increased play, particularly groups. Tom assumed the General Manager position at South Hills this past April in addition to his Golf Course Superintendent role. Summer projects have included the enlarging of tees to keep his turf in shape under heavier traffic and plans this fall call for the continuation of his tree planting program.

FRANK MAURINA, Maple Crest Country Club Golf Course Superintendent, indicated a "good year with increased play" also. Daily golf course management, in addition to some fairly extensive bunker construction, particularly on the seventh and ninth holes and the renovation of the 8th tee which has added 15 yards to that hole, has kept Frank busy this season.

Ditto, ROGER RAICHLE, Trout Lake Golf and Country Club GCS, on the "busy summer, heavy play, but turf holding up well" note. Roger is happy with 1984 particularly since he's been getting a little rain now and is in the planning stage for some possible tee construction in the near future.

GREG SENST, Superintendent at Riveredge Country Club in Marshfield, has spent his first season at that fine facility addressing some basic irrigation inadequacies but notes a good year overall. Greg's project list has included "rough clearing" a back nine for construction and he has some fairly extensive drainage scheduled for this fall.

Hartford Country Club's RAY BENTZLER tells us this is "one of the best" years he's had, in terms of both turf and the amount of play. Ray has finished up an ambitious tee re-building project this season and has also been concentrating on re-contouring his green approaches. Additionally, Ray has implemented a ryegrass overseeding program on fairways and has been impressed with his results using a "Rubigan" program on Poa annua.

Evergreen Country Club's Golf Course Superintendent DAVID HILLS is "looking for rain" but is still enthused by the "best summer ever with play up." David has added some new tees and bunkers

to Evergreen Country Club and began a Penncross overseeding program on greens in 1984.

TED "BUTCH" PAYNE, Superintendent at Madsion's Odana Golf Course, has been maintaining through "a busy summer." Along with a blacktopping project designed to facilitate traffic movement around and through the Odana course, Ted reports keeping up with irrigation throughout this fairly "dry year."

Ted's Madison neighbor, Cherokee Country Club Golf Course Superintendent MEL MORK, is also managing to keep his fine facility in top shape, thanks in part to a new irrigation well. Mel reports extensive "railroad tie" work which he completed last fall is looking good through it's first full season. He, too, sounded a familiar note with "his turf holding up well under a lot of play."

Entomologist DR. DAN MAHR, University of Wisconsin-Madison, has described 1984 to date as a fairly "normal year," insect-wise, with some increased "greenbug" activity of late, primarily in shaded bluegrass situations, and some "white grub" damage showing up, particularly in droughty areas as the latter complete their life cycle. Some reports of "armyworm" damage were noted but activity has ceased as of this date. Additionally, "Aetinius" damage has been indicated, specifically on fairways grown on organic soils.

On the ornamental front, Dr. Mahr advises Superintendents to be on the lookout for "fall webworm" activity which is not to be confused with "tent caterpillar" and further noted, to most everyone's relief, that there have been relatively few "gypsy moth" trap catches outside of areas with known problems.

A final note of warning from Dr. Mahr deals with increased spider mite populations on locust, spruce and crabapples, which carried over from 1983's build-up. Could be severe under dry conditions.

Another Assistant Golf Course Superintendent has arrived on the scene. Sue and PAT NORTON welcomed John Ryan Norton into the world at 1:56 A.M. on August 26. He weighed in at 7 pounds 1 ounce. The reports are that, fortunately, he looks like his mother!

Not everyone in the state has been the benefactor of the generous rainfall most of us have been. The southern parts of Wisconsin has been exceptionally dry since the 15th of July. TOM HARRISON of Maple Bluff Country Club in Madison points out that the most recent report of the Department of Agriculture declared the soil moisture status in the southern two tiers of counties in the state "exceptionally dry." Tom says it was a good time to analyze the effectiveness of his new double row irrigation system. MONROE MILLER, Blackhawk Country Club in Madison, feels that this summer ranks with the 1976 & 1983 seasons in terms of stress on his golf course. Both hope for ample fall moisture to help get caught up going into the winter.

Well, the best golf and the best grass lie ahead through the Fall of 1984. We'll be in touch one more time this season, so don't get too far away.