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Potpourri Of Time And Weather

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

My 25th year as a golf course superintendent has come to an end. It seems like 15 years rather than 25. That might be because each year seems to go by faster and faster.

Thinking back there have been great years and good years and years full of challenges but I can count on one hand the number of days I did not wake up excited to go to work.

I have learned a lot about grass, golf and business but most of all about people. Of course there is plenty I do not know yet so I will not stop learning any time soon.

There is one lesson I keep learning over and over. I do not think it is because I am an idiot but because I look for the good in people and especially in employees. I need to fire faster not only for my own sanity but to improve the workplace for all the other employees who play by the rules and do a good job.

Overall in 25 years I have had great employees and have only needed to get rid of 10 or so employees but it is still a agonizing decision no matter how frustrating the employee is. Usually it is for not coming to work on scheduled days and amazingly most of the employees did good work when they did show up. As much as I agonize over the decision I feel instant relief when the employee is let go and the entire staff seems happier knowing they do not have to make up for the bad employee.

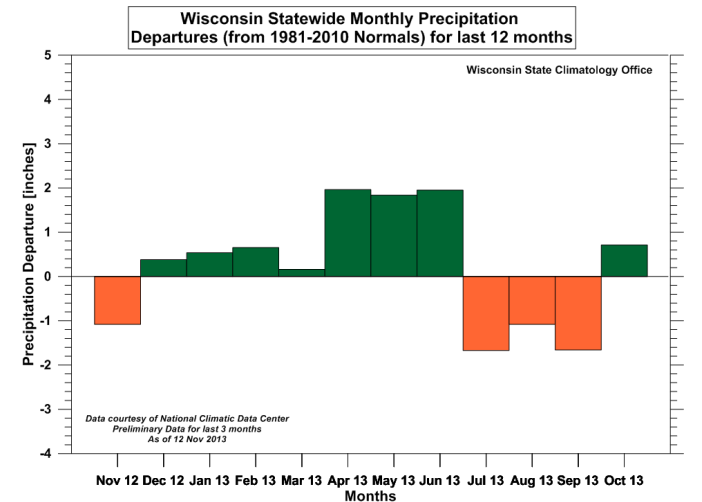
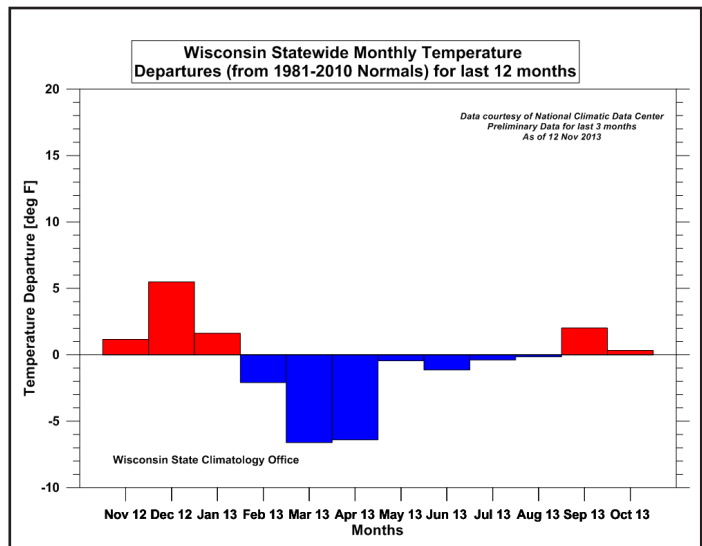
So 25 years gone and 23 to go until I retire to run a laser cutting hover mower on someone else's golf course.

This year like most offered different challenges and different weather. I suppose there is no "normal" weather and there probably

never was.

Our minds easily remember mild springs, warm summers, colorful falls and cold winters with snow from December through March. But in reality the weather is always changing and most years in the past had cold spells and hot spells and dry spells and wet spells.

For most golf courses this season ended abruptly and without complaints from the hard core golfers about staying open a couple more days. Wednesday was cool but playable and Thursday it snowed and by Saturday the ponds were covered in ice.



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The National Climatic Data Center graphs show spring was cooler and wetter than the 20 year average.

School of Turfgrass Management

January 21st - January 23rd, 2014 (8am - 6pm)
Madison, WI—Dane County Extension Office
5201 Fen Oak Dr, Ste 138, Madison WI 53718-8827

Providing Knowledge & Technical Expertise in the Art & Science of Turfgrass Management

About the School

The School of Turfgrass Management provides three days of intensive, in-depth training in the biology, ecology, and cultural management of turfgrass. Technical information will be presented in lecture settings on the basic applications of turfgrass management applicable to golf course management, lawn care, athletic field management, and sod production. The knowledge will be integrated into hands-on case studies where attendees will work together to solve problems related to the lecture material.

The Goal

This School is designed to provide a basic foundation of turfgrass training for individuals with no formal education in turfgrass management or for those who desire a refresher.

Who Should Attend

Turfgrass managers and horticulturalists of all skill levels will benefit from the information presented in this school.

Registration

For complete registration information, please visit:

www.turf.wisc.edu



www.turf.umn.edu



Instructors

Without question, the strength of the School of Turfgrass Management lies within the depth and experience of the turfgrass faculty. This program allows for extensive interaction with researchers and educators having national and international recognition.

Doug Soldat, Ph.D.

Department of Soil Science
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Brian Horgan, Ph.D.

Department of Horticultural Science
University of Minnesota—Twin Cities

Chris Williamson, Ph.D.

Department of Entomology
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Paul Koch, Ph.D.

Department of Plant Pathology
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Bruce Schweiger

Department of Plant Pathology
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Sam Bauer

Extension
University of Minnesota—Twin Cities

Deadline is January 3rd, 2014

Registration is limited, so we encourage you to register early. Persons who register after the school is filled will be placed on a mailing list for the next session offered.

For questions about the school, please contact:

Doug Soldat, 608-263-3631, djsoldat@wisc.edu

Sam Bauer, 763-767-3837, sjbauer@umn.edu



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

With the late spring and cool fall leaves seemed to hang on later than normal so we are hoping for a few decent days without snow to mulch leaves, mark drains but I am not sure this snow is ready to melt.

The days to spray winter fungicides in November were few and far between because of wind and rain or the masses of golfers trying to get in one more round on the couple nice days. I was glad we were able to finish before the snow fell.

The days to play golf in 2013 were interfered with by Mother Nature. In Fond du Lac our season was 226 days. 41 less than 2012 and 20 less than the 4 year average.

Disappointingly we had only 163 golf playable days (45-105 degrees and less than .25" rain) which was 52 less than 2012 and 31 less than our 4 year average.

Not only did our season start later than normal on April 8th we basically tread water for 63 non-playable days.

It is likely payments from Imprellis herbicide damage have helped a lot of golf courses survive and make investments in their

properties over the past few years.

Nationally golf has a turned a corner economically but there are still areas that struggle due to less participation, rising costs and increased competition. In the past 12 months there have been at least 4 major courses throughout the state sold at a substantial discount after being foreclosed on by banks.

	2010	2011	2012	2013	Average
March	13	0	13	0	7
April	24	15	24	11	18
May	26	27	25	20	25
June	25	23	29	20	24
July	25	23	29	27	26
August	29	29	28	29	29
September	27	23	30	25	26
October	22	23	24	23	23
November	15	12	13	8	12
December	0	0	0	0	0
Total	204.25	174.5	215	163	189

DAYS OPEN	252	237	267	226	246
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Coming Events!

Tues and Wed Dec 10th-11th, Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium, American Club, Kohler

Tuesday January 14th, WTA Turfgrass Research Day, Pyle Center, Madison

Feb 2-7, Golf Industry Show, GCSAA Conference, Orlando FL

Wednesday February 5th, Golf Industry Show Wisconsin Room 6-9pm, Brickhouse Tap, Orlando, FL

Wednesday February 17th, Assistants Seminar, Whispering Springs GC, Fond du Lac

Monday March 3rd, WGCSA Spring Business Meeting, South Hills CC, Fond du Lac

Wednesday March 5th, Northern Great Lakes Spring Symposium, Wausau (Hospitality on March 4th.)

Tuesday April 22nd, April Golf Meeting, Strawberry Creek, Kenosha

Monday May 12th, May Golf Meeting, West Bend CC, West Bend

Wednesday May 28th, Super/Pro, Fox Valley GC, Kaukauna

Monday June 23rd, WGCSA Tournament Meeting, Brown Deer GC, Milwaukee

Tuesday July 29th, UW - Summer Field Day, OJ Noer Facility, Verona

Tuesday August 11th, Joint meeting w/Northern Great Lakes Chapter, Brown County GC, Green Bay

Monday September 15th, Wee One Fundraiser, Pine Hills CC, Sheboygan

To Be Determined by WTA, WTA Fundraiser

Saturday October 4th, Couples Outing/Party, Wild Rock GC, WI Dells

Tues and Wed Dec 9th-10th, Turfgrass Symposium, American Club, Kohler

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Foreclosure is never easy for golf courses employees or customers but can bring new investment into a tired operation.

According to newspaper reports this fall will mark the end of operations for **Maple Grove Country Club** near Lacrosse and **Hudson Golf Club** in Hudson.

Hudson Golf Course opened in the 1950's and sits on 140 acres and received a lot of play from the Twin Cities area. The owners have said it is no longer financially feasible to operate as a golf course and hope to have the property rezoned from residential to commercial.

Maple Grove has been a staple of the golf community for 84 years. The course had over 1000 members in 2000 but only 100 in 2013. Maple Grove features a banquet facility that can seat 1,100, a indoor pool, tennis courts and the 180 acre golf course.

Having been through a foreclosure in a previous position I know it is a uneasy feeling and I wish the best of luck to the families and employees of struggling golf courses everywhere.

Old Hickory Golf Club in Beaver Dam has made moves to survive into the future when

the shareholder membership and board of directors voted to sell the course to a private investor.

The 193 acre course opened in the 1920's and expanded to 18 holes in 1968. According to the Beaver Dam Daily Citizen the course had 400 members in 1991 but is down to 150 currently.

A closed auction was held November 22 with only qualified bidders participating. The club had one "stalking horse" agreement to sell the club but could attempt to obtain a higher sales price through the auction.

In a move to protect the club into the future bidders had to keep the property as a golf course, honor all booked events and infuse capital to make improvements.

Although course closings will outnumber openings again in 2013 there are plans to begin a possible multi-course development 15 miles south of Wisconsin Rapids. The 1,500 acre site is being looked at by Mike Keiser who owns the 5 course Bandon Dunes complex in southern Oregon.

Keiser is expect to close on the sand covered property on December 17th and is expected to name a architect for the first 18 holes soon

after. According the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel article by Gary D' Amato Madison based Oliphant Companies will build the courses.

The site features sand up to 100 feet deep and 60-80 foot sand dunes. The project should increase Wisconsin reputation as a golf destination and bring more travelers to Central Wisconsin.

In other positive golf news Rob Schultz of the Wisconsin State Journal reports that changes at the 4 Madison City Golf Courses have been well received and financially successful during the first year

Despite the poor weather the courses move to eliminate contracted golf professionals to manage their golf courses worked out and the courses turned a profit and play was up 1% through October.

With the city operating carts and concessions service and pricing has been consistent and complemented by long time customers. The Madison courses were some of the few left with cart and concessions contracted over to golf professionals. And although I am sure the pros holding those contracts worked hard to serve the golfers there comes a time too much revenue is



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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

left on the table by the course owner and things have to change.

Despite programs to encourage family golf, junior golf, women's golf and to programs to encourage current golfers to play more our best bet for the immediate future is the baby boomers.

According to the National Golf Foundation 36 million baby boomers will reach retirement age in the next 15 years and 7.3 million of them golf. Hopes are the boomers will contribute 50 million more rounds of golf each of the next 15 years.

Best of luck to all courses and staffs as we move through this winter and have hopes for a nice spring in 2014.

Speaking of the Madison Golf Courses **Ray Shane**, Golf Programs Supervisor recently retired after 23 years of working for the city of Madison. Shane was unique in the fact he was a Class A PGA Professional as well as a Golf Course Superintendent and switched hats often during his years. Congratulations Ray!

Tom Van Valin the 32 year superintendent at Rivermoor Golf Club passed away on September 3rd. Tom is survived by his wife Pat and children Terri (Dan) Rossiter, Todd (Andrea) Calloway, and Josh (Grace) Van Valin.

Madison based **Laser Link Golf** has sold its reflector business to Prestige Flag of San Diego. Prestige will take over all manufacturing and distribution of Laser Links SmartStick, Smarty and other reflector products.

Laser link will continue the manufacture and sale of distance measuring equipment.

Eagle One Golf a manufacture and distributor of golf course products has acquired Western Golf. Western Golf products are sold to 38 countries including thousands of courses in North America.

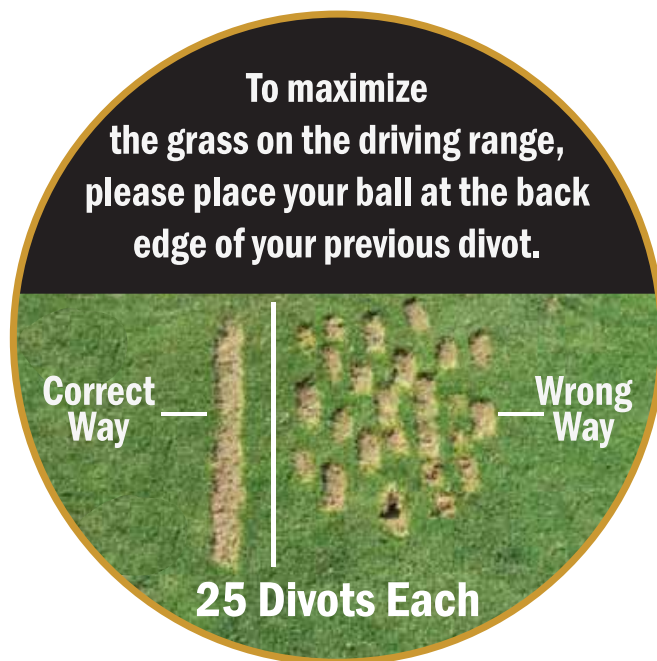
Another year is in the books as I go to print with my 36 issue as editor. I want to thank the advertisers of *The Grass Roots* who pay for layout and printing of one of the few chapter magazines



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Steven Hammon, Golf Course Superintendent at Traverse City Golf & Country Club in Michigan has this sign posted on his driving range to educate golfers on the proper way to take divots while practicing. According to published USGA reports the scattered method (wrong way) can take out 50% more turf than the line method (right way). Single lines are easier to fill and heal faster than large destroyed areas.

remaining in print. We are lucky to have found a great partner in Park Printing to print, bind and distribute *The Grass Roots* to keep costs down.

I receive a number of digital only magazines and find them difficult and bulky to read. I pick the titles that interest me and ignore the rest and I believe many readers do the same if they even open the e-mail.

We are lucky to have a chapter publication we can easily find on our desks, lunch room tables or the magazine rack at home. The advertisers in these pages make it all possible so be sure to thank them for their support of your education.

A recent National Golf Foundation survey of media preferences has shown core golfers overwhelmingly prefer print golf magazines. Since most golf course superintendents got into this business because we liked to play golf it only stands to reason we prefer print as well.

I also need to thank our writers and especially the professors, students and university staff who make *The Grass Roots* worth reading. Many of the chapter publication I receive may have one educational article in them and the rest is association news. Association news is good but only when coupled with the latest research and education.

Enjoy the slower off season and I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

UW / WTA Field Day Set For January 14th

By **Dr. Doug Soldat**, Department of Soil Science, University of Wisconsin - Madison,
Monroe Miller, Executive Director, Wisconsin Turfgrass Association

Last year the UW Turf Team and the WTA held the first annual Turfgrass Research Day on the UW-Madison Campus. The event shined a light on the tremendous amount of work that happens at UW (thanks in no small part to the support of the WTA), and introduced you to many of our graduate students who too often work in the shadows of their advisors. The focus of this annual event will be to provide relevant and cutting edge information to help you do your job better. Improvements in technology will allow us to provide this content online, so if you can't make it down to Madison on January 14th, you can log in to your computer and watch from the comfort of your office.

This year, we have put together a particularly strong educational program for you. We are elated to announce that Dr. Geunwha Jung will be paying us a visit and giving an update on his excellent work on fungicide resistance. I'm sure it will be a special moment for Geunwha to watch

his former student Paul Koch make his first presentation as an Assistant Professor at UW. Dr. Koch was recently offered the position vacated by Jim Kerns, and we couldn't be happier about it. Paul will be discussing rust control and management,



a disease that has been increasing in severity around Wisconsin lately.

Other guest speakers include Dr. Jim Brosnan from the University of Tennessee and Dr. Ed Nangle from the Chicago District Golf Association. Dr. Brosnan is an up and coming weed scientist who will have something for everyone (golf, sports, lawn) in his presentation about new herbicides for weed control in cool-season turf. Dr. Ed Nangle was recently hired by

CDGA to replace Dr. Derek Settle, who's been a regular at our Field Day the past several years. Dr. Nangle earned a Ph.D. from Ohio State University, and will be discussing the negative impacts of shade and associated management strategies.

In addition to the distinguished lineup of guest speakers, you'll hear the latest and greatest from the UW-Madison Turf Team, including an Emerald Ash Borer control update from Dr. Chris Williamson based on a long-term study he just concluded. New TDL manager Bruce Schweiger will provide a look at the years behind and ahead, and two top grad students, Renee Rioux and Mark Garrison, will provide summaries of their respective work on dollar spot and the carbon footprint of turf maintenance.

It's hard to predict what Mother Nature has in store for us on January 14th, but you can bet that the UW/WTA Research Day will be well worth the price of admission. We hope to see you there!

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WTA Turfgrass Research Day Conference & Webinar

Tuesday, January 14th, 2014
Pyle Center

702 Langdon St • Madison • WI • 53706

The WTA and UW–Madison Turf Program welcome you to the 2014 Turfgrass Research Day. You may attend in person at the Pyle Center or attend via webinar. If you choose to view the talks via webinar, you will receive the link by January 13th, 2014. For driving and parking instructions, visit <http://conferencing.uwex.edu/maps.cfm>. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Audra at ajander2@wisc.edu or 608-845-6536.

SCHEDULE

8:00am	Coffee and Donuts	1:30	Shade: Causes, Impacts and Fixes <i>Dr. Ed Nangle, Chicago District Golf Association</i>
8:30am	Welcome/Introductions/Awards/ Announcements	2:00	What's Up With Dollar Spot? New Insights on an Old Foe <i>Dr. Renee Rioux, Plant Pathology, UW – Madison</i>
8:45am	Control and Management of Rust <i>Dr. Paul Koch, Plant Pathology, UW – Madison</i>	2:30	Break
9:30am	Microbiology of Turfgrass Soils <i>Dr. Doug Soldat, Soil Science, UW – Madison</i>	2:45	The Carbon Footprint of Turf Maintenance <i>Dr. Mark Garrison, Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, UW – Madison</i>
10:15	Break	3:15	New Herbicides and Strategies for Weed Control in Cool-Season Turf <i>Dr. Jim Brosnan, University of Tennessee</i>
10:30	Fungicide Resistance: Failure or Reduced Efficacy? <i>Dr. Geunhwa Jung, Plant Pathology, University of Massachusetts</i>	4:00	Question and Answer, Adjourn
11:15	Insecticide Management Options for Emerald Ash Borer <i>Dr. Chris Williamson, Entomology, UW – Madison</i>		
12:00	Lunch – provided		
1:00pm	TDL Update: The Year in Review and the Road Ahead <i>Bruce Schweiger, Turfgrass Diagnostic Laboratory, UW – Madison</i>		





2014 WTA Turfgrass Research Day Attendee Registration Form

Please submit the following registration form by Friday, January 10th, 2014 to WTA / 2502 Hwy M / Verona / WI / 53593

Company _____

Mailing Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone & Fax number _____

Email address _____

Attendee Names (Only if attending at Pyle Center)

**Registration prices are before the January 10, 2014 deadline.
 After that date, and/or if you plan to register on-site add \$10 per person.**

Webinar Only - WTA members \$25 each X _____ = \$ _____

Webinar Only - Non WTA members \$40 each X _____ = \$ _____

Attendance at Pyle Center \$40 each X _____ = \$ _____

2014 WTA Membership Dues X \$125 = \$ _____

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

You may pay by check or credit card. If paying by check, please make the check payable to WTA and return to 2502 Highway M / Verona / WI / 53593. If paying by credit card, fill out the information below and mail to above address or fax to 608-845-8162. You may also register online at www.wisconsinturfgrassassociation.org.

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