

## Extreme heat was an absolute in summer '95



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**I**n days when every opinion on a certain topic is given a hearing on radio, television or in the newspapers, it's nice to see a group of experts come forward with the absolute last word on a subject, which none will dare dispute or criticize.

That's what we've received from The Ohio State University's Cooperative Extension. Some of the leading turf scientists there—John Street, Karl Danneberger, Bill Pound, Barbara Bloetscher and Joe Rimelspach—have issued a report on the disease pressure exerted on golf courses across the Midwest during the heat-wave of 1995.

The report says high soil temperatures were a major cause of root decline and provided, "No opportunity for root re-growth and recovery."

That "No" makes you sit up and take notice.

"Hot, humid days and nights," says the report, "provided no relief for turfgrasses..."

Another unqualified "no!"

Is there any hope for the future, when a heat-wave will *certainly* hit us again, you ask? The answer is an unqualified...YES!

Monitoring the weather and knowing the most likely sites for disease development on the golf course are two factors the OSU extension says can help you time and plan fungicide application strategies.

"Once a disease is active, fungicide applications to stop the progress are often ineffective," say the authors. "With many of these diseases, a preventive fungicide program is critical for successful management."

Management practices some superintendents were expected (forced?) to follow didn't help.

"To prepare for golf tournaments or special events, greens were often cut lower and more frequently to increase ball speed," says the report.

**[GOLF/GROUNDS]**

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Turf had literally "no opportunity to recover" after July 4th, assert the OSU scientists.

A crushing "NO" to the midsection!

Small greens were especially hard-hit as pin placements dwindled quickly. Greens with poor tile drainage or internal soil drainage or inadequate irrigation systems also suffered.

Solutions for turf survival during the next heatwave begin with raising the height of cut.

"High-quality turf was maintained at the courses at which mowing heights were raised early, before the onset of heat," and where rollers were used to compensate, say the experts.

"GREEN SPEED MAY HAVE TO BE SACRIFICED for the overall betterment of turf and playability under extreme environmental conditions," say those in the know at OSU (emphasis mine).

Hard answers sometimes mean hard choices.

I ask you: Will golfers playing in 100° heat quibble over a measly sixteenth or thirty-second?

Let me know what you think of closing a course for some days—or even half-days—during severe heatwaves. Have you done it? If so, do you lose money, or ultimately save money from less turf repair maintenance?

I'd also like to know how you went about keeping turf alive in the summer of '95, and what you plan to do to prevent damage from heat stress the next time. Because it will happen again.

Absolutely.

Call me at (800) 225-4569, ext. 709.