Midwest Association of
Golf Course Superintendents

Volume 1, Issue 2 April 15, 2006

ASSISTANTS UPDATE

Dates of Interest

- Apr. 24 - Monthly Meeting—Heritage Bluffs GC
- May 17 - Class C Shoptalk Broken Arrow GC - Lockport, IL
- May 22 – MAGCS/ITF Golf Meeting - Midlothian CC

Class C Advisory Committee

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Schwarz and Vermeulen Share Insight and Analysis on Weather at Winter Workshop

By Justin Wheeler

February 23rd was a day full of predictions for the year to come. The morning started out with Phil Schwarz, the weekend meteorologist on ABC Channel 7. Phil was full of information and internet resources for viewing and attempting to understand forecasting models and other weather data. With a whole slew of websites to start he gave us vast resources available to all on the internet. For those of us that are interested and want to peruse these websites, I have included them at the bottom.

John Ekstrom, ABC 7 Meteorologist Phil Schwarz, with Moderator Keith Krause

Phil really hit home when he started talking about the extreme drought that we suffered through last year. His point that it was a very isolated phenomenon was surprising to many. Supporting his statements, though, were pictures from the drought monitoring websites that showed a narrow band from Illinois down into Texas. Apparently the rest of the nation was not nearly as bad as we were last year. Questions began to come forth about if this would continue into next year. Fortunately we only had to wait a little bit to hear a real good explanation on why this year should be better than last…or at least why we should have little faith in the apocalyptic predictions for three to six months from now.

After a small break Phil got into the severe weather and even more interesting the hurricane prediction centers websites that showed maps and alerts as well as tracking these powerful systems. An interesting note was the explanation for the very severe hurricanes that have been making the news lately. Phil's explanation was a very long word that when broken down meant thirty-year cyclical occurrences. Basically, for the last 30 years the hurricanes have been fairly weak thanks in part to the cooler Atlantic Ocean and for the most part tracked along the warmer Atlantic Current. With the warming Atlantic Ocean we are seeing more lifting in the atmosphere creating these mega-hurricanes. Apparently this has happened before, but Florida and the gulf coast wasn't as populated at that time so it didn't seem as drastic as it does today.

Phil wrapped up with the answer we had all been patiently waiting. How do we make sense of long-term climate and weather predictions? And we were not disappointed one bit. The easiest way to predict long-term weather is to see it as three equal thirds. There is a 33% chance that it will be drier than normal. There is a 33% chance that it will be a normal year.

Dates to Remember, Cont.

- June 7 - MAGCS Monthly Meeting, Old Oak CC
- July 15 - Kane County Cougars Game
- July 20 - Mid-Summer Slam - Dave & Buster's – 6pm
  All Classes Invited
- Thursday, October 5 - Shoptalk - Inverness CC - Palatine - 6pm

Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents

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And there is a 33% chance that it will be wetter than normal. The way to make sense of a prediction that might say 40% drier is to slide the numbers and say 40% drier, 33% normal and 27% wetter than a normal year. So getting worked up over a 40% drier prediction is the same as getting worked up for a 60% chance that the year will be normal to wetter than normal. The same goes for temperatures and other long range forecasts. The only time to really be nervous is when a prediction is at or above 50% for a given weather occurrence.

Paul Vermeulen-USGA

After lunch we were treated to some useful information from Paul Vermeulen of the USGA agronomy section. Paul started with the idea that we should be prepared in this region for a summer that might be like a Kansas City or St. Louis summer some day with high temperatures and humidity.

Armed with the climate information for these cities on the southern line for most bentgrass putting greens he outlined what most superintendents have to deal with in those locales yearly. Bentgrass decline is the most common problem due to the bentgrass roots dying off in the heat, breaking down into organic matter and plugging the macropores of the soil thus nearly eliminating any infiltration and percolation of water. The greens get soft and spongy from the increased organic matter and wear patterns are soon evident from golfers and scalping mowers. To combat this problem research was done that showed a hydro-ject in the raised position with a wetting agent applied every three weeks during the summer increased percolation by as much as 28% and directly attributed to healthier greens. More frequent aeration that is not disruptive to the plant, like a slicer or hydro-ject, is one key to maintaining healthy greens in the middle of summer.

Equally important is tree management. Greens that are buried under shade will never reach their full potential. One can explain to owners and greens committees until they are blue in the face how important sunlight is to a green, but the thought of cutting down trees is still considered heresy by many golfers. With technology today, the goal may be easier to achieve with a digital camera and some photo editing software that will let one "cut" out the trees that are of concern and show how much better a hole may appear or how little the removal will be noticed.

At the conclusion of the day some of us gathered at Buffalo Wild Wings for our first "shop talk" of the year, an informal gathering to trade stories and catch up with friends. Thanks to all who attended. *

Related Weather Sites

Drought Monitoring	drought.unl.edu
National and Regional Weather and Maps	www.crh.noaa.gov
Forecasting Models	rap.ucar.edu
Severe Weather Warnings	iwin.nws.noaa.gov
Local Weather and Other Analysis And Models	www.cod.edu
More Models and Analysis Information from Ohio State	asp1.sbs.ohio-state.edu/
Storm Prediction Center	spc.noaa.gov
Hurricane Monitoring Center	www.nhc.noaa.gov
Climate Prediction Center	www.ncep.noaa.gov

Meet at Broken Arrow GC for Assistant Shoptalk
Thursday, May 17th 5:30pm

Farrell & Bruce Road in Lockport