



THE NEWSLETTER

Golf Course Superintendents Association

OF NEW ENGLAND, INC.



August — 1985

DATES TO REMEMBER

August 1-4

Senior PGA
Digital Seniors Classic
Nashawtic C.C., Concord, Mass.

August 5

GCSANE Regular Meeting
Hickory Ridge C.C., Amherst, Mass.

August 12

News Deadline for September Newsletter

August 21

Rhode Island Turfgrass Field Day
University of Rhode Island
Kingston, R.I.

September 4

GCSANE/RIGCSA Joint Meeting
Wannamoissett C.C.
Rumford, R.I.

September 10

GCSANE/CGCSA Joint Meeting
Wampanoag C.C.
W. Hartford, Conn.

—LAST MEETING—

Dedham Golf & Polo Club
Dedham, Mass.

July 8, 1985

During the morning meeting, Bruce Packard, Supt. of Amherst G.C. was given his first reading as a regular member and Allen Singer of Cedar Glen G.C. was voted into the GCSANE as an Associate Member. Our educational session featured Jeff Heine of Micro Trac Systems with a demonstration of their new sprayer regulating system. The House Staff at Dedham then ended the morning session with a real fine buffet lunch - Thank You!

Golf Results

GCSANE Championship

1st Net	Gary Lucini	68 Net
(Match of	Rick Arzillo	
Cards)	Leroy Allen	
1st Gross	Paul Miller	75
Seniors	Jim Bean	66 Net
Commercial	Mike Hannigan	64 Net

Our hats off to host super Bob Mucciaroni: (If I ever wallpaper my office with bentgrass).

The Nature of Summer Patch: A Status Report

Houston B. Couch: Professor of Plant Pathology
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

The hot, dry weather of the past few summers has managed to bring out the worst in Kentucky bluegrass in many sections of the country. Loss of turf quality in both professionally managed grass and home lawns under the care of husband, wife and children has been common. There has been a "fringe benefit" from all of this, however, for the situation has sparked an increased research interest in the nature of these types of disorders and the development of procedures for preventing them from happening.

In New York, a hot weather, dying-out condition of Kentucky bluegrass has been assigned the name "summer patch." The researchers at Cornell University have suggested that this same disorder may be occurring in other northeastern states as well as New England. Reports from Michigan State University indicate that summer patch may also be a problem in certain midwestern and north central states.

Outbreaks of what is being referred to as "summer patch" develop during July and August during prolonged periods of hot, dry weather. The symptoms described for this disorder are irregular patches of dull tan to brown grass. The individual areas may be more or less circular in outline and extend up to several feet in diameter. Within the diseased stand of grass, there may be patches that show the basic "frog-eye" pattern of blighted grass with center tufts of apparently healthy plants.

The research at Cornell University indicates that summer patch might be brought on by periods of high air temperature stress and then the colonization of the weakened plants by the fungus *Phialophora graminicola*. This fungus species is commonly found in association with the root systems of grasses. Its potential for affecting the health of plants has been the subject of considerable research by plant pathologists in England.

The research in England has shown that *Phialophora graminicola* is a very weak pathogen. In fact when it is placed in the soil, it actually protects the turfgrass plants from take all patch (*Ophiobolus* patch). Also, when the soil is infested with *Phialophora graminicola*, the growth rates of fescue and bentgrass are increased. This is thought to be due to the fact the fungus enhances nutrient uptake by the root system.

The laboratory and field research procedures described by the workers at Cornell University to bring about death of Kentucky bluegrass by *Phialophora graminicola* have been of the type that place severe stress on the plants. For example, in one series of pathogenicity experiments, the tests were conducted on Kentucky bluegrass field-grown sod cut at a depth of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch and then placed over a $\frac{3}{8}$ inch layer of soil in plastic containers. These plants were then held in growth chambers under a continuous day-night air temperature of 85 degrees F. for 15 weeks. During this time, the leaves were maintained at a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch cutting height.

In view of the extreme stress placed on the growth systems of the plants in these tests, it is not surprising that *Phialophora graminicola* switch from its normal role as a beneficial soil-inhabiting fungus to an active Kentucky bluegrass root colonizer.

These various research findings place summer patch in the category of turfgrass diseases known as "Senescence Syndromes". The diseases in this grouping are caused by a combination of acute plant stress followed by colonization of the weakened tissue by various microorganisms. Examples of other senescence

The Nature—con't. on page 2—

Golf Course Superintendents Association



— Chip Shots —

Congratulations to Jim Fitzroy C.G.C.S., The Presidents Club for scoring his first Ace on Dedham Golf's third hole during our July meeting there - maybe the bar will stay open a little longer at Hickory Ridge, Jim! . . . in an effort to keep our membership more informed of events and changes in the golfing world. The Newsletter is now on an exchange publication list with The National Golf Foundation. We'll keep you posted from time to time with articles from their publication, The Wedge . . . Our new membership directory was distributed at the July meeting, call a director for your copy . . . Going to the National in San Francisco? GCSANE Member Chip Brearley's travel agent wife Nancy can give you qualified help with your air reservations, 584-6568 . . . just to help quell the controversy surrounding the GCSANE Commercial Division Championship; the editor reserves the right to edit all print ventilating wrath on Golf and Handicap Chairman Steve Murphy, the man works hard to do the best job he can and should be heaped with accolades, not cheap shots, right Murph? . . . Congratulations to Steve

—The Nature—con't. from page 1

syndrome diseases are Curvularia blight and anthracnose.

In assessing what can be done to control these types of diseases, the first question that must be answered is whether or not the invading fungi or bacteria are actually compounding the acute stress-induced problem by introducing an added measure of tissue degradation, or if the initial environmental pressure was severe enough in itself to lead to the ultimate death of the affected leaf, crown or root system.

In light of (i) the research reports from England that show *Phialophora graminicola* to be beneficial to the growth and development of turfgrass, and (ii), the work at Cornell that shows an extreme stress must be placed on the Kentucky bluegrass plants in order to weaken them to such an extent that a major form of colonization by this organism can take place, it would seem reasonable to assume that what is being called summer patch is a product of environmental stress rather than the result of infection and colonization of the plants by either *Phialophora graminicola* or any other microorganism.

What is evident is that much more field and laboratory research is needed before the cause and nature of summer patch is adequately understood and a definite determination made as to whether the problem that is being described is within the realm of control by either spray programs with fungicides or the use of certain management practices to help offset the damaging effects of environmental stresses. In the meantime, in situations where it has been decided that the disease at hand is indeed summer patch, the best advice on fungicidal control that can be given is that if these attempts are made, one should keep the expectations for their success to a minimum.

□ □ □

—NEXT MEETING—

Team of Two Championship
Hickory Ridge C.C.

Amherst, Mass.

August 5, 1985

10:00 Directors Meeting

11:00 Regular Meeting

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Golf

(Reservations a MUST -
August 2nd Deadline)

Superintendent Profile: Bob Ruzala has been keeper of the greenery at Hickory Ridge for the past two years. Prior to this position he spent seven years as superintendent of Holyoke C.C. He is a 1977 graduate of the Stockbridge School of Agriculture and is a member of both the GCSANE and GCSAA.

Bob and his wife Denise make their home, along with their two children in Chicopee, Mass.

Directions: Mass. Pike to Chicopee exit; follow Rte. 33 North to Rte. 116 North; go left on Pomeroy Lane (opposite Dairy Mart) to club.

and Cindy Chiavaroli on the birth of their daughter Hillary Ann (July 4) and, Bob and Denise Ruzala on the birth of their daughter Jaclyn Diane (July 3) . . .

□ □ □

President's Message

Donald Hearn

August—1985



It is somewhat embarrassing to talk about a dress code but some of the sartorial delights seen at our recent meetings begs the subject be addressed.

It's a free country and what one wears is dictated by one's own sense of appropriateness. For anyone to be the arbiter of what may, or may not, be appropriate would probably be a mistake. Therefore, the following comments are offered as suggestions.

Bathing trunks - these are usually worn at the beach and poolside. Even though the course to be played has a lot of water hazards bathing trunks are not considered golf attire.

T-shirts - colored or otherwise, some clubs prohibit them. Leave the T-shirts at home.

If you think this is directed to you, you may be right.

The Superintendent-Manager meeting held at Rhode Island Country Club was successful despite the thirty minute rain and lightning delay.

Close to seventy people took part in the golf and the dinner which followed. Thanks to Superintendent Bob Ainsworth for a superbly conditioned golf course, Manager Maureen Drummy for a delicious meal served, and the entire staff of the Rhode Island Country Club for their hospitality.

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—The Super Speaks Out—

(Welcome to The Super Speaks Out - a monthly feature which offers the golf course superintendent a forum to express his views on topics and issues relating to his profession.)

This month's question: Do you feel increased media coverage of national tournaments places new pressure on the local golf course superintendent to keep the speed of his greens in line with those seen on TV events?

Don Hearn, Weston Golf Club: "No question, the mystique - associated with 'fast greens' - has overtaken us and exposure from the media certainly has been a factor in its coming into being.

"We (supers) only can hope that this emphasis on fast greens is part of the maintenance cycle which keeps the spotlight rotating on different elements of course conditioning.

"There are instances where stimpmeter readings are posted on clubhouse bulletin boards and I suppose the superintendent draws the responsibility for putting them there. The only catch is, instead of giving degrees of greens speed, in some cases, the stimpmeter has become a speedometer.

"I just wonder whether putting such emphasis on speed of the greens doesn't tax the average golfer, the 16-17 handicap player who feels more comfortable on moderately-paced greens. Whatever, greasing up the greens is the 'in thing' and we have to live with it until something else comes along to replace it."

Tom Schofield, Wellesley Country Club: "Most definitely, the TV courses and their 'souped-up' greens have made an impact on the member and he's turned it over to the superintendent.

"So, now most of us have to keep our greens as fast as they are on television which places another burden on the maintenance program. Frankly, it's horrendous that the situation exists. However, I'm conforming to it, despite the increased danger of losing the greens.

"It used to be that we'd speed up greens for special events but that's carrying over to everyday play. This is a costly operation and hazardous to the

health of the greens. There are times when they need a rest, when they don't have to be fighting for their lives day-in and day-out.

"It's another political thing, too. People want to be able to say the greens at their club are the fastest around. If it gets any more critical, we'll have the greens down to dirt. Interesting, huh?"

Doug Johnson, Pine Brook Country Club: "This is a funny question because I don't see where there's any issue involved. I've always given my members fast greens, so what's the problem?"

"I know that some courses maintain the speed of their greens according to the type of play on them. That means they're doctored to be fast for special events and regular when the members are playing social golf.

"Personally, I've always thought of keeping my greens fast as a direct challenge to my ability. To me, fast greens are a part of everyday maintenance, so exposure on TV doesn't affect me or put any added pressure on me.

"Besides, I don't think it's fair to the members to change the height of the cut on the greens. Why should they have to adjust their putting stroke from week to week or month to month?"

"So, whatever event my members are watching, on TV or in person, doesn't change the speed of our greens. They're fast and always will be. Fast greens go with the job, if you ask me."

Jim Beane, Mt. Pleasant Country Club: "I'd have to say that TV events turn on a certain segment of my membership, to the point where the pressure is there to speed up our greens.

"Fortunately, the emphasis on fast greens is isolated. I can't say what it is on-the-button. But, whoever they are, most them are lower handicapped players who don't speak for the majority.

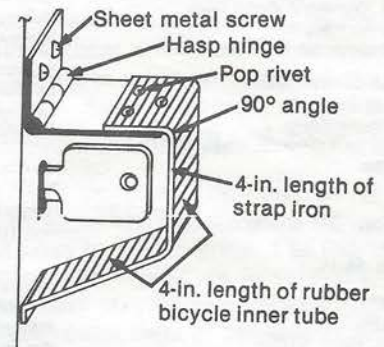
"I've been cutting at 5/32nds for the past few years instead of the 1/8 when I first took over as superintendent. Heck, with our undulating greens, the present cut gives our members all they can handle with a putter.

"I know most of my members don't want to putt on pool tables and they aren't interested in stimpmeter readings. All I know is that faster greens

Protect Tractor Ignition Keys

Our wheel tractor was designed with an ignition switch on the side of instrument panel. After the ignition key was broken off several times by the operator climbing on and off the tractor, we moved the ignition to the front of the panel. This proved to be no solution because the operator's knee would hit the key.

After replacing a dozen keys, we fastened a \$2.00 hasp hinge to the panel with metal screws. Then we pop-riveted a U-shaped piece of strap iron to the hasp hinge. This hinged guard automatically swings down over the key. A rubber-cushion over the strap iron protects the operator's knee.



This shield saves the cost of many \$2.50 keys and prevents damage to the ignition switch. More importantly, however, it eliminates the frustrating downtime during our already short growing season.

*Allan Klatt, Horticulturist,
County Gardens Nursery and Sod,
Anchorage, Alaska*

are harder to maintain and more prone to disease.

"Somehow, nearly everyone around here is convinced fast isn't always best when it comes to our greens. But, yes, the media coverage gets the fast-green talk going and I'm aware of it. It's just part of the merry-go-round in our business. So far, it's moving slowly enough for me to keep up with it."

—GERRY FINN

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