



Chicago District Golf Association

Scouting report 5-4-14

Hurry up and wait is about the only way to describe the current situation for many courses. Frustration has set in with the climate as the cold, wet, cloudy weather is good for nothing except spending time worrying about it at the bar. Many superintendents who responded to the recent survey sent out by CDGA and MAGCS indicated the most consistent reason as to why they did not have damage was purely down to the fact that they have a strong creeping bentgrass stand on their putting surfaces. I think they might even feel a little bit guilty – if not, they certainly are extremely grateful!

Germination has been slow and while covers will help to warm soils they do very little as far as making an immediate putting surface. Moisture has arrived in a somewhat more consistent manner although there were instances of heavy hail occurring this week in the western suburbs of Chicago. Staying the course and remembering it is somewhat out of your control in regards to climate will help to reign in the frustration somewhat. Take solace in knowing that many people are in the same situation, trying to get back to optimal conditions as soon as reasonably possible and that once soil temperatures get to $>55^{\circ}\text{F}$ consistently we will all feel some relief.

Many superintendents understand now what they have and I think the fear of loss has now been overcome with determination to beat the damage with the hope that there is some form of spring prior to the return of summer – roots have begun to make an appearance downward but it doesn't seem like they are sprinting as of yet. Courses have aerified and some are looking close to recovered while others just need some heat. Time is all that is required – which unfortunately is not there in abundance. If the forecast holds for next week with temperatures possibly reaching the 70's and if we are lucky a warm rain then help can be considered to be on the way!

Climate:

Rainfall, dark and dreary conditions, cold winds and little heat may be fine for golf in Ireland but they do not help anyone trying to establish turf in areas that were damaged in Chicago due to winter cold. This week has been a write off in many ways as germination may have been achieved last week but turf has turned to a standstill as far as spreading over damaged surfaces – our header picture shows it clearly. Temperatures took a nose dive late towards the end of the month and this week, highs only reaching 40's in conditions similar to late March rather than early May (Figure 1). The data at the golf house of course being warmer than anything on the northshore which suffered to an even greater extent with the frigid air coming off the lake. This following the weather pattern of the previous week left germinated seedlings in an unfortunate state of emergence but susceptible to damage if conditions became any way marginal. Precipitation did show up to a much greater extent (Figure 2) towards the end of the month and while personally I am ok with it, the standing water was not ideal on courses. Rehydrating soils this time of year is important however and so when it gets dry in the summer (hopefully) then there can be no complaints! The precipitation was consistent for the most part and so helped to maintain even surface moisture around the seed beds.

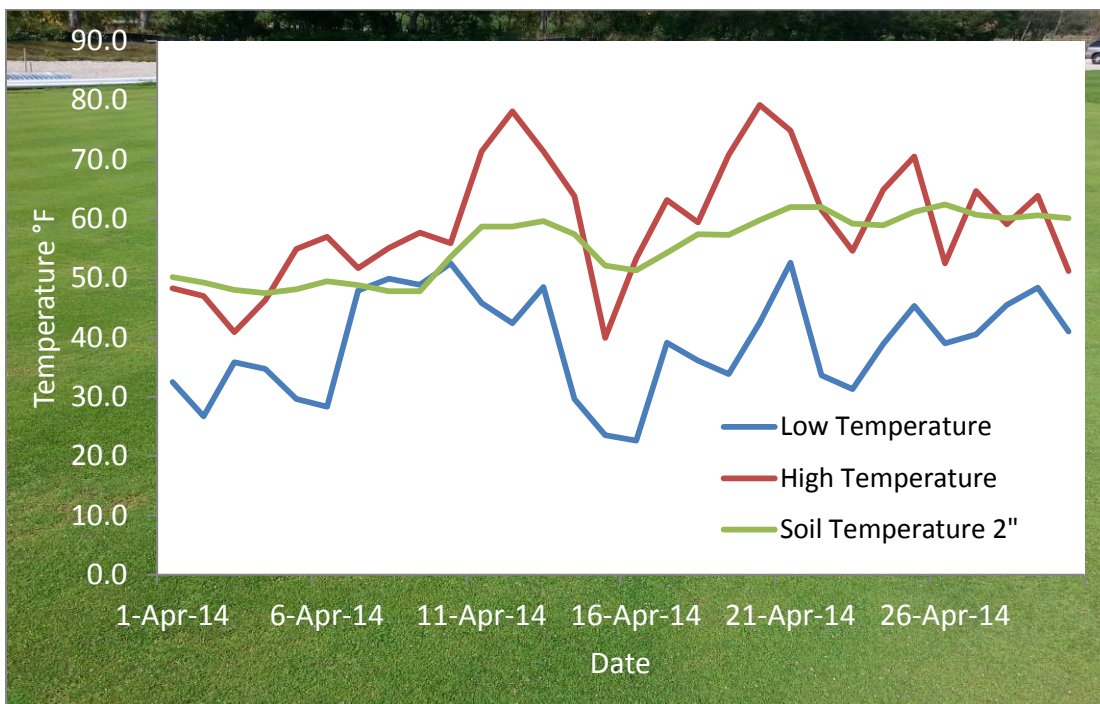


Figure 1. Air and soil temperatures at Sunshine Course, Lemont IL, April 2014. (A Southwest Chicago suburb)

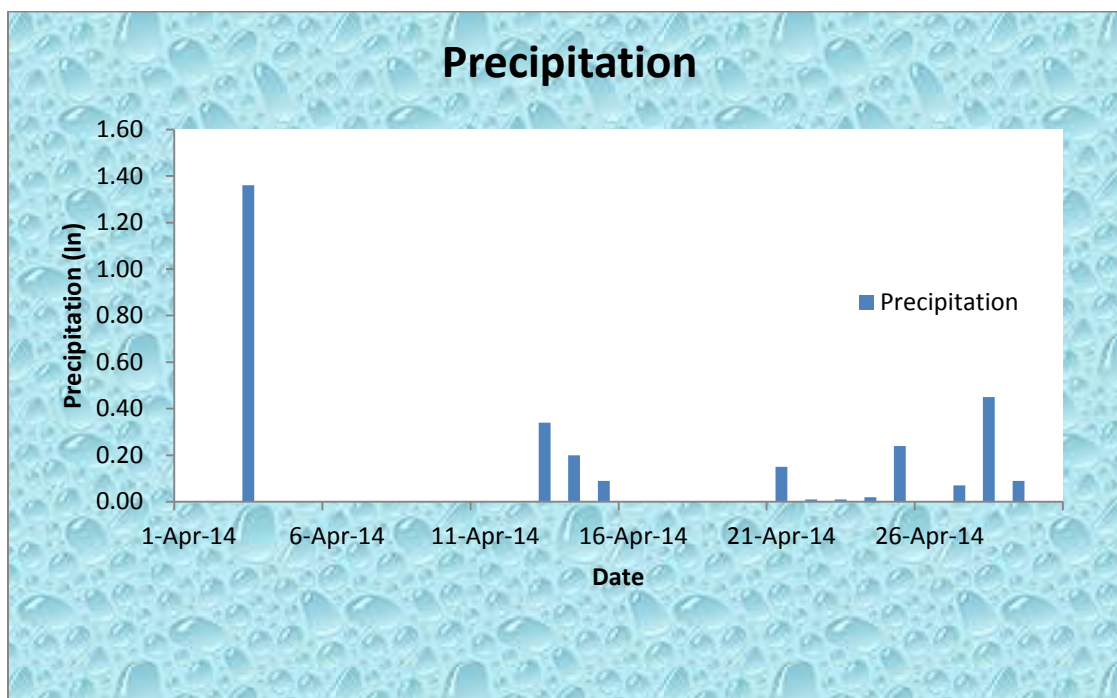


Figure 2. Precipitation for April 2014 at Sunshine Course, Lemont IL (A Southwest Chicago suburb).

The average temperature for the month was 49.0 at Sunshine Course while rainfall totaled 3.03". The rainfall total is about 0.5" behind average, while just about average for the temperature. There were seven days above 70 degrees at the golf house (unbelievable I know), but the month finished out with a high of 51 degrees. The cold finish along with TERRIBLY dreary conditions made it abysmal to try and get bentgrass to move and establish and the return of poa was favored certainly by this weather. Light towards the end of the week was severely lacking (Figure 3) and it dragged both temperature and activity backwards.

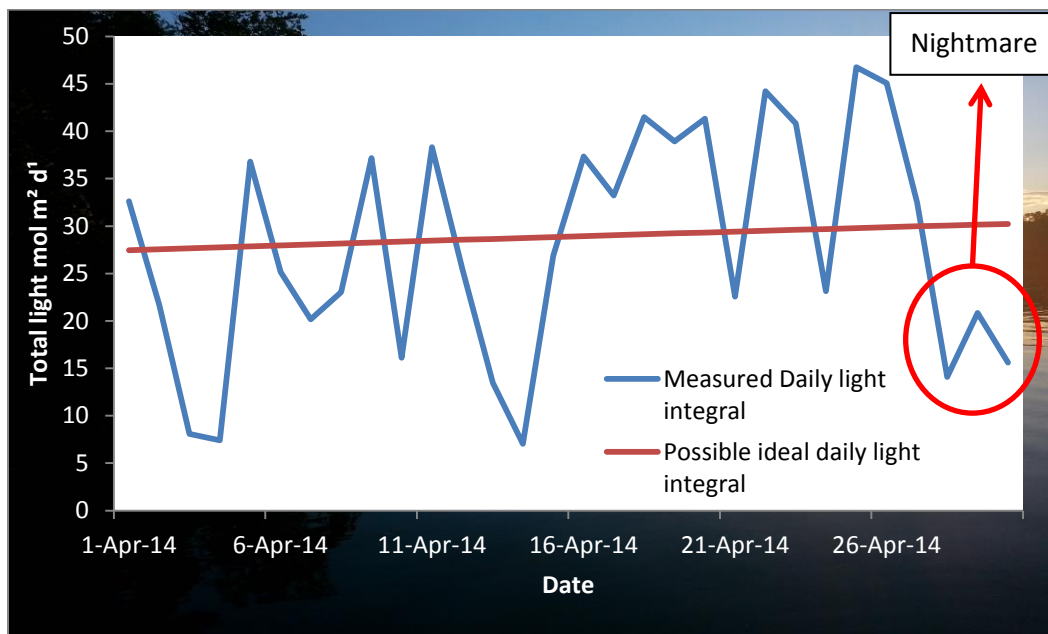


Figure 3. Measured daily light integrals and possible ideal light conditions at Sunshine Course for April 2014 (A Southwest Chicago suburb).

Central Illinois also saw a temperature dip as well as southern Illinois which saw soil temperatures drop in Carbondale from 72 °F down to 61 °F over the space of five days (I know – either one would be ideal in northern Illinois right now). Air temperatures maxed out at Hickory Ridge on the 30th of April at 57 °F which sure sent Zoysia and Bermuda back into the straw format slowing down any greenup that was on going.

Disease:

The first report of disease under covers arrived this week with some possible damping off / cool season pythium occurring. Temperatures and excess moisture early this week were good for the problem to arise under covers. The battle begins of when to put them on and when to take them off to maximize growth without encouraging too much disease pressure. Frost is predicted tomorrow night on the north side and I would expect temperatures are cool enough to justify covers for a day or two yet. The other issue with the covers is the extended periods of leaf wetness that are occurred with the weather – consistent double digit hours of humidity >90% ran through the end of the week.

No further discussion on disease popped up this week though with the weather the way it was, it was surprising not to have conversations about microdochium, as conditions were surely ideal in open areas for it.

Weeds:

Proxy / primo timing is gone according to the gdd tracker (though I don't know how this week did anything to help it move!) Regardless – seedheads were spotted on the northside (Picture 1) and so let the battle commence. It is surprising somewhat that they have emerged already, however as I had reports from Iowa only early last week that first seed heads were spotted – maybe GDD tracker really does know more than we think! www.gddtracker.org



Picture 1. *Poa annua* cousins laughing as they emerged on the northside this week.

We are also getting late for applications of pre-emergent herbicides in the northern part of the state, it has long since passed for southern and central Illinois, as has proxy/primo application timing. The GDD tracker has also indicated we are starting to get late for applications of Mefluidide.

Early season flowering has begun to occur with dandelions starting to pop up – but we are a little early still for the application – though I suspect Florasulam is already on the go.

Insects:

No reported activity and a cool down further south will have helped stave them off for another while. I have not heard any reports of activity or if there are any thoughts on potential for a natural suppression of insect activity this year due to the temperatures.

Management strategy:

Mowing heights are on everyone's mind and how to take care with them to make sure that turf doesn't suffer as many (not all) try to get heights back down. The 1/3 rule still applies of course and if green speeds are not where you would like look to roll instead of pushing the number down. Turf is still not in an ideal situation and so to try and obtain as much healthy turf and rooting prior to summer stress, optimizing leaf surface area is going to be important. If turf came through unscathed of course there is more flexibility but until you are confident in turf growth returning – slowly does it!

FINALLY!!!

The table is here!! The defending champ Mr K Sams is back but he is not in front. Mr D Groelle and B. Zeigler are out in front by a nose – the question is – do they have the stamina for the long race – derby day – I couldn't resist.

1. D Groelle	3
1. B Zeigler	3
2. K Strother	2
2. K Sams	2
2. K Peterson	2
2. A Palos	2
2. A Morris	2
3. T Bain	1
3. J VerCautren	1
3. B Bossert	1
3. A Unrau	1

Last week my travels meant I omitted the picture and many commented on its demise – fear not it has returned. The predecessor was the impact of a voracious vole. I

WHAT caused this? (lines)



E Nangle 5-2-14

Dr. Lee Miller's most recent report is linked below, dated 04/22/14



http://turfpath.missouri.edu/reports/update04_22_14.cfm

As always if you have a question or query please do not hesitate to ask, and you can call or email.

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