



Chicago District Golf Association Scouting Report 11-16-14

As we celebrated the centenary of the Chicago District Golf Association with more than 500 of the association members and dignitaries, it was hard to not reflect on what the association has done for the turf industry both locally, regionally and globally. The focus of course on the dinner was the service that the association has provided to the golfers, but in the last 40 years (almost!) the director of turfgrass programs job has been a unique position that directly impacts golf course superintendents all over the region. Discussions surfaced on how the position came to arrive – with thanks to Denny Davenport and Ray Anderson for having the fortitude to put it in place. The hope is that the position goes from strength to strength and is still in place in another 100 years! Thank you all for all the support and input that make the job a great one!

There were other meetings this week of course. The central Illinois golf course superintendents had their end of year education day which was well attended and saw some very interesting topics covered including drones, the new alliance between course mechanics and superintendents and winter damage thoughts. Further to that was the annual MAGCS Medinah clinic where Dr. Paul Koch and Dr. Kevin Frank gave excellent presentations on snow mold and winter damage topics. On that front upcoming (Jan 13th-14th) is the annual ITF conference at Bolingbrook GC. Speakers penciled in include Dr. Jason Henderson University of Connecticut, Dr. Roch Gaussoin University of Nebraska Dr. Aaron Patton Purdue University and Paul Vermuelen PGA Tour Agronomist amongst others. Register here for the early bird fee <http://www.illinoisturfgrassfoundation.org/event-1770167>

Finally, the bottom fell out of the weather on us. Many rushed to get pipes blown out and there were some problems getting compressors – however I think most people were cleared out and ready for winter. Snow fall should begin next week and whether or not it will be as bad as last year – it remains to be seen – but the long term forecast is not overly promising right now. Our snow mold trials have gone out this week and the second applications will go out in two weeks time – weather permitting! We are getting to the late stages of the scouting report for the year and so if there is a topic you might like covered that has not been touched yet – let me know!

Climate:

The cold weather has returned – I think that its called winter – and we have hit very cold temperatures that have not been seen in the area this early for 30 years. One thing to note was that we were starting to get very dry prior to going into the winter so the precipitation that we saw earlier in the week was appreciated somewhat. Temperatures have taken a rapid nose dive and while a slightly longer period of frosts and temperatures in the 30's would have been preferable, the winter hardening off process of turfgrass dormancy looks like it should be a little short on time but we are not in a bad situation currently with the fact we have been dry. There are a couple of other points to note, for anyone that walked on green surfaces lately – they are hard – less turf cover means soil is not as protected from heat loss – however as you can see with our soil temperatures – its pretty amazing what two inches of soil and 3 inches of turfgrass can do from a temperature standpoint (Figure 1). Finally, while the lack of rain has certainly been noticeable, another issue we have spotted on our data is the fact that the dew point has dropped down into the teen's which to an extent explains why no one has seen much frost despite the extreme cold – there is not enough moisture in the air to allow for from formation combined with a lack of rainfall.

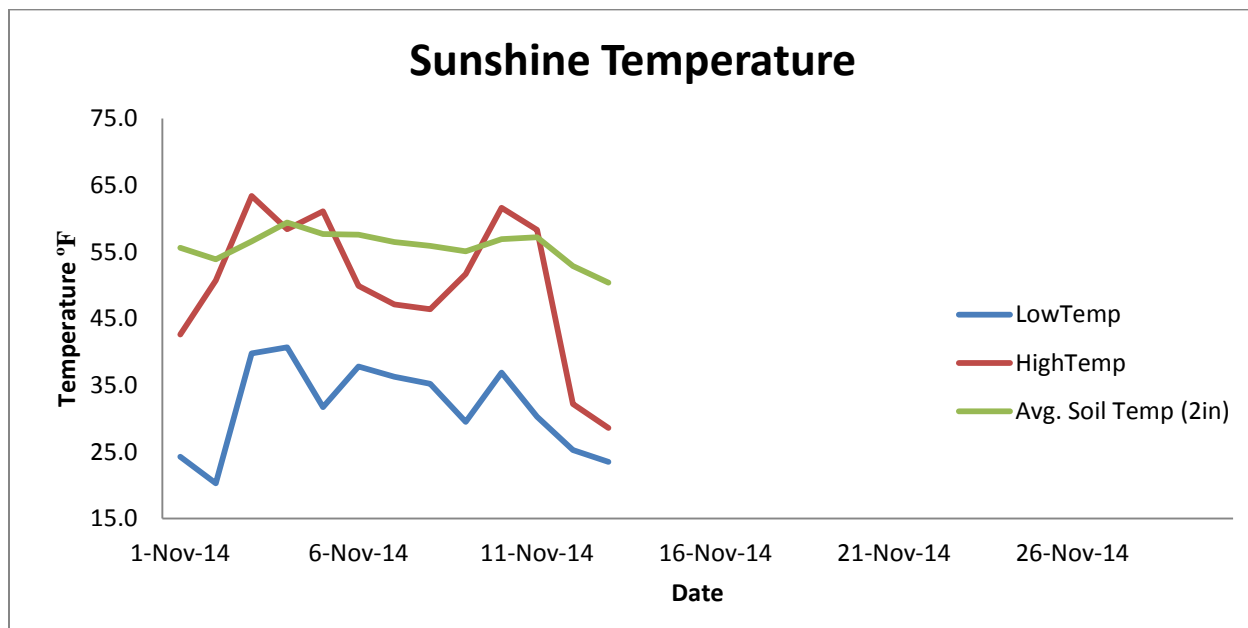


Figure 1. Daily high and low temperatures and average soil temperature at 2" depth at Sunshine Course, November 2014 (A Southwest Chicago Suburb)

November traditionally sees 3.32" of precipitation in the area – right now we are about 0.24" and it does not look like more rain is on the way (Figure 2). Snowfall accumulation can be expected but nothing that might penetrate the soil profiles. As courses are not getting pipes blown out – lets hope there is enough moisture in the top of the profile to avoid any problems.

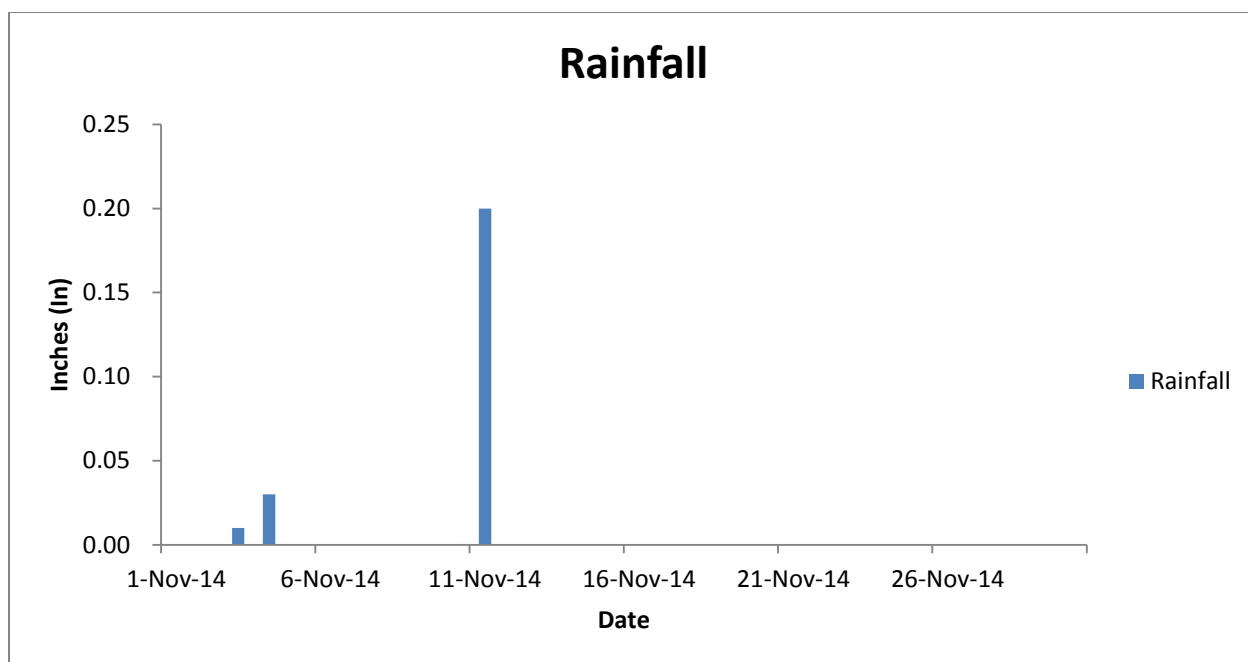


Figure 2. Daily rainfall totals at Sunshine Course, Lemont (Southwest Chicago) for November 2014.

Disease:

Activity is all but gone for the year and it looks like staying that way. Snow mold control has undoubtedly been made by a majority of golf courses or it is coming soon if not. There was one point raised at the MAGCS meeting however that was important to remember in regards to residual impact of the applications. Chlorothalonil and iprodione in particular were the products tested in Dr. Koch's trial and he indicated that the climatic factor that had the greatest impact to product degradation was rainfall. That being the case a dry winter will allow for longer periods of residual control but a wet winter will hurt that impact and once control products were lost or degraded – there was almost an immediate increase in disease activity. We have put out our trials for the season and will make second applications late next week (Picture 1)



Picture 1. Winter plant protectant trial at Green Acres CC, Northbrook, IL

Insects:

The understanding is that with these temperatures, insects that have survived will in all likelihood have taken a deep deep dive under the soil surface. Further to that, the lack of moisture over the last 6 weeks may have helped reduce nesting sites for some of the problem insects – here's hoping!

Weeds:

Some henbit and common chickweed have appeared in thin areas as it is their time of year to dominate, however similar to turf a majority of plant material has ceased growth and the predicted single digit temperatures will finish it off completely.

Management strategy:

While it the idea of golfing may now be gone for the season for many of us, there was plenty of periods over the past month where golfing conditions were excellent with one exception – frost! It is annual battle that many of us forget leaves scars long into the next year. Frost formation tends to occur on cloudless nights when plants lose temperature to a much greater extent that on a cloudy night. The reason for this is that heat lost from the earth's surface is lost on a clear night while on a cloudy night the heat is reabsorbed in the cloud cover and then re emitted to the earth's surface keeping temperatures sufficiently warmer. The main frost formation will actually occur just before sunrise when the leaf surface is actually coldest. The problem is that once heavily frosted plants are subject to mechanical damage by either carts, mowing equipment or foot printing the damage is clear to see. If the crown or growing point of the turf is damage then it may be killed altogether while if not then damage may be somewhat superficial with a lot of time required to heal properly. Another coffee and donut while waiting always helps!

FINALLY!!!

No one got the reason behind the picture this week. The damage was to bermudagrass that had been scalped not much before the extreme winter of last year further south – the combination of the mowing height mistake and the cold really put a hammer to the bermudagrass – anything still green is either weeds or zoysiagrass which has much greater cold tolerance. In light of the fact that there are three more reports left – all Mr. VerCautren can do is tie.

K Sams	16
J VerCautren	13
K Peterson	10
B Zeigler	10
T Schmitz	8
K Strother	6
F Sutter	6
J Turner	6
D Groelle	5
A Palos	5
A Unrau	5
S Hillyard	4

Whats happening in this picture? Answers to enangle@cdga.org



Dr. Lee Miller's latest report dated 10-23-14 can be found below.



http://turfpath.missouri.edu/reports/update10_23_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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