

## Winter Weather Déjà vu? January 23, 2015

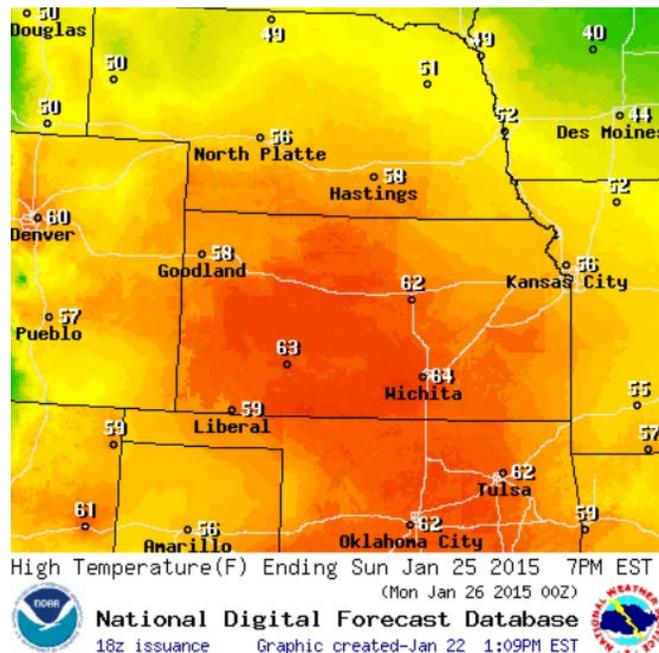
This year has started out much like last year. Twenty fifteen started brutally cold, especially during the Nebraska Turf Conference, but now temperatures have rebounded. High temperatures this weekend are expected to be well into the 50s and may even reach 60+ in southcentral Nebraska (Fig. 1). And much like 2014, we haven't experienced much winter precipitation. The Lincoln Airport hasn't recorded more than a trace of precipitation since a quarter of an inch fell during December 22nd-23rd. The long-term forecasts generated by the NOAA Climate Prediction Center indicate a high probability of below-average precipitation and above-average temperatures to affect Nebraska over the next six to ten days (Figs. 2 & 3).

We all know last year's brutally dry conditions produced significant winter desiccation injury. Our survey results indicated that 84% of golf and sports turf managers had some level of winterkill last spring. The return of dry and warm weather has caused some concern. We are working hard to understand what factors affect winter desiccation injury and to develop BMPs to reduce the risk of damage with the help of a grant from the USGA. Unfortunately, the results are still a few years away.

We had a great winterkill discussion on the last day of the Nebraska Turf Conference. Based off that discussion, some of the most successful prevention strategies in 2014 were fall sand topdressing and light applications of winter irrigation. It may be wise to do some light irrigation this weekend, especially on areas prone to winter desiccation. Thatchy creeping bentgrass was most prone to desiccation injury. While we continue to work on irrigation guidance, such as how much is enough or too much, our current recommendation would be to apply small amounts of water to increase crown moisture. Too much irrigation could cause problems if temperatures crash in the future. The weather service in Omaha/Valley reminded us on Facebook that there is still a lot of winter left with 9 of the 10 largest snowfall events occurring in February and March.

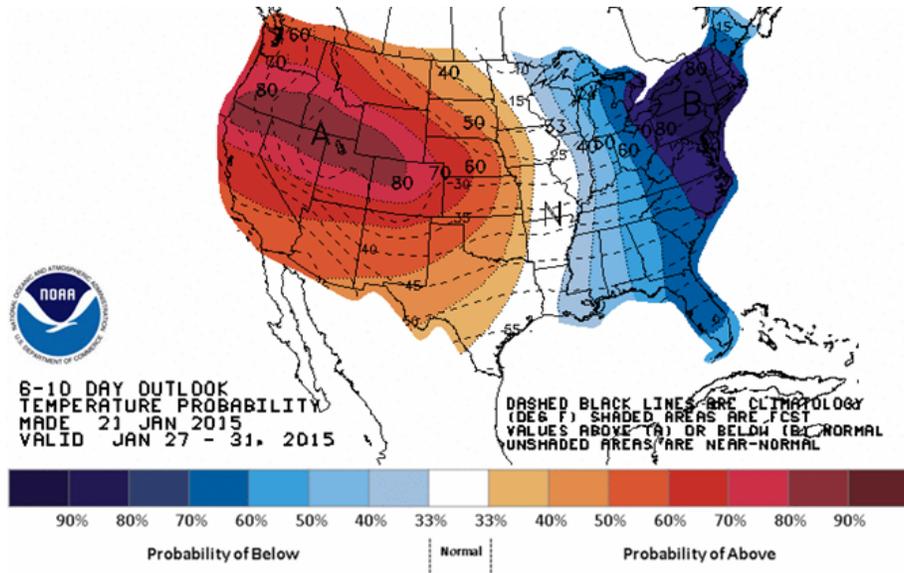
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**Figure 1. Weather forecasts call for warm and dry weather across much of the Northern Great Plains this weekend. Sunday temperatures may even reach 60F in southern Nebraska. Courtesy of the National Weather Service.**

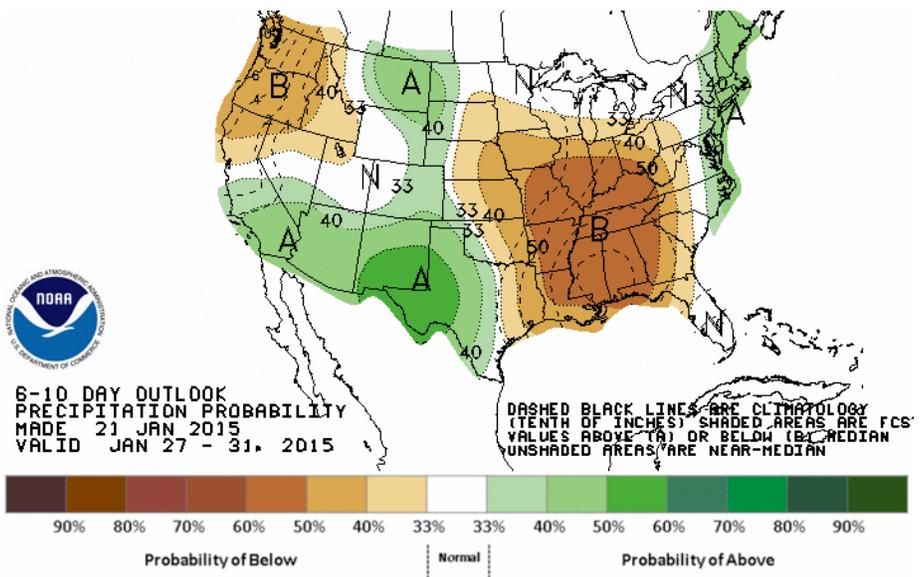


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**Figure 2. The probability high temperatures will be above or below normal over the next 6-10 days. Courtesy of the NOAA Climate Prediction Center.**



**Figure 3. The probability precipitation will be above or below normal over the next 6-10 days. Courtesy of the NOAA Climate Prediction Center.**

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