



# New Jersey Golf Course Report

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## Turf Conferences - Time for a Change?

by Don Marshall, Pres. N. J.

Can you justify the rapidly climbing professional improvement account in your budget? Sure, scientific knowledge in this field is advancing by leaps and bounds. Yes, we all know you went to more lectures, meetings, conferences, field days, seminars, and conventions in the last two years, but did you get *that* much more out of them?

For one thing, you know damn well that you suddenly needed air when the next speaker was someone you had already heard, or was talking on a subject already driven into the ground. If you'd stayed you might have picked up another particle of new information, but you didn't. Your *derriere* hurt, you had cigarette fatigue, and if you left a little early you could at least get served one round at the bar before the flying wedge arrived. I don't blame you!

As one who attends no fewer, or more, than an average number of educational events, I'm somewhat confused and a little fed up. It costs good money, both to put on, and attend a turf conference, and yet I have begun to believe that for all our progress we have become so self-concerned that no one has taken a look at the outside world to see what advances have been made in the field of communications alone. While I am not a communications expert, isn't there a chance that some of the following concepts could apply to our "profession" as well as they do to others already using them?

For instance, what about closed circuit TV? In its simplest form it at least relieves an over-crowded lecture hall without loss of in person relationship. If you have a question, you can still go to a microphone and ask it. In a more advanced state it could improve conferences in a whole regional area. Can you imagine Penn State, Rutgers, and U. of Mass., or Iowa, Purdue, and Michigan State Conferences all being held at the same time with the same vast audience? No duplication, no weak fill-in speakers, no triple expense; but rather, a high quality, in person conference with all concerned present at the same time at their local University. Talks could be given from

all locations as well as questions asked. There could still be a limited time for discussion of strictly local problems, of which I am convinced there are not many. Most of the Universities in question have the needed facilities available now.

Now let's move along to another idea. Ever wished you could hear an especially good, or individually relevant, talk again, and certainly we've all missed a good talk for one reason or another. How would it be if for a dollar or two you could get a verbatim copy of this talk on a prerecorded cassette type tape? Might just help some of the fellows giving the talks improve their technique also. Advance a little further, what about a selection of a dozen tapes each month from which you pick the ones of particular interest to you? Doctors have been doing it for several years.

Remember those times the gentleman giving the lecture starts flashing data slides on the screen? You're really interested, but he either goes too fast, or the cigar smoke prevents a close study. You could question him during the Q & A period, but there's a saying that describes just how popular it would be to have *those* slides shown again. Perhaps, though, if you could get a microfilm copy of his talk, or all the talks, it would be of value to you, your Association, and perhaps even your Chairman. A central microfilm library might just be an acceptable idea in addition.

Ever been chairman of the Program Committee for your Association and tried to get big name speakers? Or worse still, have you sat through a local meeting listening to good old Mr. Elroy ....., who's been on the program every year since 1942, and wondered where, oh where, the talent is? The answer is usually that the talent is trying to get some work done, rather than continually reporting on a project that may have been successful, but is now closed. I can think of a few university professors, who might be glad to video tape a complete report of a project—once for many later replays—rather than try to play "social secretary" about which meetings are "musts", "maybes", "a friend", or "not this year". You might be surprised how your meeting content could improve. In a few years I

dare say you could be enjoying the same benefits on your own equipment at home.

Remember at the "Golden Era" Turf Conference talking to Joe Grass in from North Elba C.C. about the great meeting he attended in North Platt last month? Ever tried to get a copy of the Proceedings of that conference if there were any? It would seem reasonable that some national group could at least provide an address list of the location of these available pieces of information, if not actually keep copies on hand for purchase.

In this same regard the National this past year introduced a novel concession at the Show—a bound volume of literature from a large majority of the exhibitors. It would seem to me that someone could show a profit by making available a compendium of all major turf educational speeches, eliminating duplication, arranged by subject, and sold on a national basis to all related industries. Perhaps I've overlooked some economic factor, but most are published somewhere even now.

There's even a chance that in the long run you and I may be able to punch a card with the symptoms of a turf problem, insert it in the telephone, and receive the solution forthwith.

If it appears that I have taken a long walk up the side of a molehill, forgive me. It just seems to me that education is basically communication and information retrieval; and that we could be doing better at both by just making use of methods and equipment readily available.

## Wet Wilt - Rot - Scald

by Alexander M. Radko

Eastern Director USGA Green Section

Rot and scald have been terms used to describe the conditions of "Wet Wilt". This problem has been a serious one in the northeastern region during this past summer and we are still paying the consequences in poor turf, weed, and disease problems.

Wet wilt occurs when we experience excess rains in summer as we did this July. We cite two examples of conditions that were prevalent throughout the area. In July, Supt. Lou Vay of Linwood Country Club, Linwood, New Jersey, meas-

ured 17½ inches rainfall as compared to 1¾ inches in July 1968. In the Boston area the sun shone only three days in July, the rest of the month it rained, or was threatening. It couldn't have selected a poorer month for these excesses because high temperature too is an important factor in the occurrence of wet wilt. This much rain in a cooler month would have caused far less concern among golf course superintendents.

Wet wilt occurs when the soil is supersaturated. The air spaces in soils are filled with water, the plant's oxygen supply is entirely cut off or severely restricted and the plant weakens or dies, depending upon (1) how long it is subjected to this condition and (2) how hot it is. The higher the temperatures the greater the rate of transpiration, the quicker the plant wilts!

This year another "excess" figure prominently in the weak turf picture—and this was the excessive lack of sunlight. When green plants get little sun their growth is soft, weak and spindly (like growing grasses in the shade). They are also very susceptible to a phenomenon described as "Cloudy Day Wilt" by Supt. Harry Meusel of the Yale Golf Club, New Haven, Connecticut, in articles published as a result of independent investigation toward an advanced degree. One of the things he found was that grasses are acutely susceptible to wilt when the sun shines again after several days of cloudy, overcast skies.

In our observations this year *Poa annua* was most severely affected by wet wilt. *Poa annua* is our perennial weak sister. It is naturally weak in July and August without "help" from outside sources. When wet wilt and cloudy day wilt team up, the stress on this weak sister is devastating. Crabgrass and other weeds were quick to fill in the weakened or dead areas. Crabgrass grew uninhibited and seeded profusely like it does in the crabgrass triangle (Philadelphia to Washington to St. Louis). Crabgrass could be a serious problem on golf courses for several years as a result of this 1969 seed crop. *Silver* crabgrass, also known as goosegrass, (why?, we don't know, unless because it's so deep rooted that a goose on his best day couldn't hope to pluck it!) is the most difficult to control of the crabgrasses.

Bentgrasses didn't suffer much damage except in areas of poor drainage. Those who were on a three to five year bentgrass renovation program were able to see the fruits of their labor. The bentgrasses responded well to careful syringing, which is the only cure for wet or cloudy day wilt. As contrary as it sounds, the cure is to add more water, but only enough to cool the plant, to slow down its rate of transpiration. During conditions described, it's an hour-to-hour battle for survival seven days a week and light

frequent syringing is the only hope until the weather breaks, or the excess moisture drains from the soil.

There are some side affects from conditions that cause wet wilt and these are:

1. Grasses become puffy as a result of a sponge-like thatch and water-logged leaves.
2. Puffy grasses are soft and weak—not especially good for golf . . . golf is best on firm turf.
3. Puffy grasses are easily bruised by traffic.
4. Soft soils and puffy grasses set the stage for scalping the grass.
5. An excess of algae forms on greens and tees, especially where turf is close cut and where drainage is poor.

### Report to the Chairman August 1969

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I'm sorry I shouted at you the other day when you questioned me about whether we were having any trouble with the course. However, I don't think it was necessary for my Assistant to grab me on the pretense that I was about to start swinging.

Yes Sir! We have been having some trouble with the course; in fact several of the members have suggested that we are stretching the truth by calling it a golf course. As you may remember, it rained the entire month of July—record amounts. Well, during the first two weeks of August, while you were away on vacation, it turned hot and dry. Now I know you have said there's nothing unusual about such weather at that time of year, and I guess there isn't. But after ten inches of rain? Let us say in layman's terms the grass just didn't have the ambition, or the guts to survive. We literally saw aerial roots growing to nowhere on the Bent, and the *Poa* (which comprises most of our turf population, regardless of what you think I told you in the spring) had just enough roots to keep it from tipping over. It sure was interesting to watch the man syringing fairways progress up the fairways with the wilt both ahead and *behind* him. Of course, as I told you earlier, I was very glad to be able to get back to watering seven nights a week. That \$18 item under Misc. last month was for a case of 6-12.

Then at the end of August we went back to our normal climate for this year, late abysmal swamp. I imagine one of the things you were questioning me about the other day is called "wet, wilted, rotten, dead grass". It's not very attractive, and from what I'm told is very difficult to play from. In fact, I've been told the latter so many times that I suggested to three of the worst offenders that they resign—they already had.

Those large brown thin areas on the greens are disease. We realize that fungicides should prevent them, and I have written several pointed letters to the manufacturers of the 5 chemicals we applied in two weeks. The small tan spots on the fairways are called "dollar spot". As soon as we get the sprayer out of the mud on the 15th fairway, we'll get right on those areas.

We do hope to get the greens top-dressed this fall, however, it may be a little difficult as the operation really takes six men, and we only have four since our "summer professionals" have left for school. I sure hope we can get Mr. Looney's son back next year. I can't quite agree with the Board that just because he cut that word in the 9th fairway with a greensmower, he should not be asked back. After all he is a member's son, and certainly was a help on those weekends that parties didn't interfere.

In closing I certainly want to thank that kind member, who sent me the case of beer the day we lost 5 greens and 11 fairways to disease and wilt. I really wasn't feeling too chipper anyway, and his note—"You might as well drink, you haven't done very well at anything else", really set me up.

Yours truly,  
Peter Poa

N. J. G. C. S. A.  
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