This month I would like to change track and talk about what I believe is one of the worst problems facing many greenkeepers today, that is, course comparisons by golfers who have little understanding of turf maintenance. I have lost count of the times someone has commented about this course "is better than that" - condition wise this is or "these greens are faster than those". These comments are fine when discussed by greenkeepers who understand the reasons and conditions, but when it is the golfer, it usually has a totally different meaning. If only we could teach the golfers to have a better understanding of the factors that affect course conditions, I am sure they would realise that the grass is not always greener on the other side. Most golfers play other courses apart from their home course. When he does he tends to see only the big picture around him, the scenery and the lay-out of individual holes. Back on his own course his head drops, he has already seen the sights and now he only sees the flaws such as an occasional weed or a small disfigurement on a green so he becomes more critical. He does not understand the circumstances. Every golf course is unique and it is difficult, if not impossible, to make like for like comparisons about conditions. The amount of play and the age of the course should always be considered before making comparisons about conditions. We, the greenkeepers know, but does the average golfer?

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Gordon Child