

**Supers Can't Create Sunlight,  
Say UF Turf Pathologist,  
USGA Agronomist**

*Editor's Note: As spring unfolds and some of our turf remains thin and less than ideal, we should not forget the lessons two of our leading turf authorities, Dr. Monica Elliott, turf pathologist from the University of Florida and John Foy, director USGA Green Section Florida Region, tried to teach us during the disastrous winter weather patterns.*

*While some club officials have reportedly derided these facts of nature as excuses, intelligent golfers understand that this has been an abnormal winter and they appreciate the extraordinary efforts of superintendents to provide good playing conditions. You can lead a person to the facts, but you can't make them think! Here is a summary of the facts for those who care to think!*

**TO: Florida Golf Course Superintendents**

**FROM: Monica L. Elliott, Turfgrass Pathologist**

*I have just spent three days examining courses in Broward, Palm Beach, Lee and Collier counties, and I feel like I have spoken with a superintendent in every county. This letter has...purposes. First, to inform superintendents that your situation is probably not much different from your neighbor's. Second, to inform the golfing public why this weather pattern is not conducive for growing grass.*

**Plant Physiology**

*...Photosynthesis is the process by which plants use energy from sunlight to breakdown water and carbon dioxide to produce the carbohydrates (starch and sugars) needed for a plant to grow.*

*...Bermudagrass requires significantly more sunlight than bentgrass to fix CO<sup>2</sup>. That is why bermudagrass is not looking very healthy in our current weather patterns. It needs full sunlight, especially in the winter when sunlight is reduced due to short days and long shadows.*

*...The rainfall in December was above normal. It actually flooded some areas. After only a week into 1998, the rainfall*

**Letters..**  
*...to the Editor*

*is already above normal for January! This situation has been aggravated by cool temperatures and overcast days. Nothing can be done about the weather.*

**Algae Slime Mats**

*...The primary problem observed on bermudagrass greens that have thinned is the development of algae... Algae have all the same growth requirements that bermudagrass does, but algae love water and, even more important, fix CO<sup>2</sup> like a bentgrass plant. So, it would be expected for algae to become a problem under current circumstances.*

**Nutrition**

*...Since many of the putting greens are water saturated or close to it, the amount of oxygen present in the root zone is probably quite limited. It also means those pesky root pathogens may be active. This means the root system is not functioning adequately. One of the purposes of roots is to absorb nutrients in the soil. Without nutrients, the plant will not be as healthy.*

**Cutting Height**

*...I know golfers hate to hear this solution, but it really does work! By increasing the height of cut, the plant has more green leaves which means there are more leaves for photosynthesizing (See Plant Physiology 101 above) which means the plant can produce more carbohydrates which means the plant will be healthier and grow better. There are ways to increase the cutting height and maintain decent speed (note I didn't say tournament speed): frequent light topdressings, or rolling 3 or 4 times a week are examples.*

**And from the USGA Green Section,  
Florida Region Director, John Foy**

**RE: 1997/1998 Florida Winter Golf Season**

*From time to time, USGA Green Section offices have sent out informational letters to courses to inform golfers about situations that are having an impact on a large number of facilities in their area.*

*...Unfortunately, environmental conditions... have caused problems in providing the level of course conditioning and quality desired at facilities throughout Florida. Over the past few weeks, I have conducted Turf Advisory Service (TAS) visits at courses from Jacksonville to Miami. It has been a general finding that the quality of, particularly putting surfaces, has been an issue.*

*Certainly by this point everyone has heard about the El Nino situation in the Pacific Ocean that is having an impact on weather across the country... an abnormal weather pattern has been prevailing. Along with the early onset of cool temperatures, frequent rainfall and numerous heavily overcast days has had a significant impact on turf health and the level of course conditioning and quality. This is true for both overseeded and non-overseeded bermudagrass putting surfaces.*

*In the South Florida area where winter overseeding operations are not as common a practice, again, the cool, wet and overcast weather has had a big impact on the base bermuda turf cover. Especially at courses where extremely low heights of cut are dictated to maintain fast putting speeds, a progressive thinning of turf density was often experienced and this was followed by a rapid invasion of surface algae.*

*Then, regardless of efforts, problems were encountered with producing a recovery response. It has also been a common finding on TAS visits that the impacts of the weather have been further accentuated in locations where other turf growth-limiting factors such as shade, concentrated traffic patterns and/or restricted drainage exist."*

*All too often when the subject of weather is brought up, some golfers are of the opinion that excuses are being made. However, as with every other agricultural endeavor, environmental conditions play a major controlling role in turf growth and*

in turn the type of course conditioning that can be provided. On a positive note, the base bermuda turf cover of Florida golf courses does possess a tremendous recuperative potential. Thus, with a few weeks of sunny, warm and dry weather, a good turn-around in course quality can be achieved.

...until more favorable environmental conditions occur, some degree of patience and understanding will be required.

### Thanks for Pledge

On behalf of The GCSAA Foundation Board of Trustees, Campaign Cabinet and Committee Members, as well as all superintendents, I thank you. Your recent pledge of \$300 will allow The GCSAA Foundation to support projects in applied research and education programs to help advance the superintendent profession within the ever developing game of golf.

We will report on successes that are a direct result of this campaign through

GCSAA publications. Please know that these are a result of your generosity.

Jamie Ortiz-Patino  
Campaign Chairman

**The "Investing in the Beauty of Golf" endowment fund campaign is perhaps misnamed. Maybe it would be better to call it "Investing in the Future of Golf."**

**I see this drive as another way to diversify and maximize our resources for funding turf research in the future.**

**We will always focus on supporting in-state fundraising. But, we will also be able to submit Florida projects for funding from this \$3.5 million dollar war chest. Donations from the member level will be vital to the success of this venture.**

**With Toro's generous matching funds challenge, my donation is now worth \$600.**

**Sign up today!**

Joel Jackson, CGCS  
GCSAA Class A Retired Member

### Must-Read Magazine

This note goes out to Joel Jackson, Mark Jarrell and the others responsible for "The Florida Green." I'd just like to commend you on the general excellence of your magazine. It's certainly a must-read for me, a writer who covers the industry. Great job.

If ever you have any suggestions or input for Golf Course Management magazine please give me a call or drop me an e-mail.

Mike Perrault  
Staff Writer

Golf Course Management

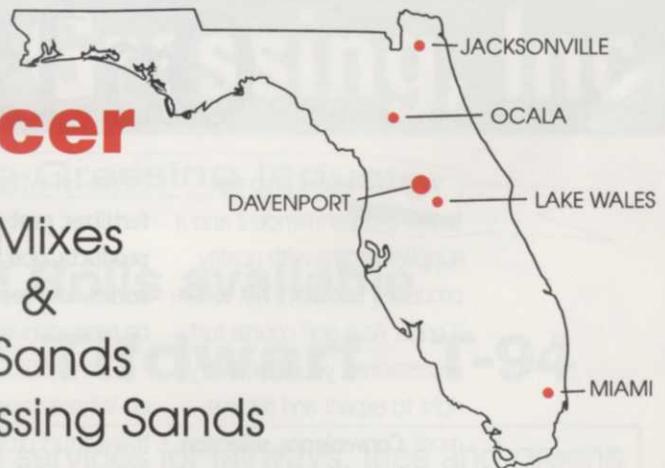
**On behalf of our Florida Green team, thanks for the kudos. we couldn't do it without the support of the FGCSA members.**

Joel D. Jackson, Editor

(NOTE: I have accepted an invitation to serve on GCSAA's Publication committee for 1998.)

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# What's a real double cut?

**Turf management tip gleaned from the Internet may help attain specific green speed**

*Editor's Note: As a superintendent who tended to use a cross-cut pattern on a double cut, this was an interesting tidbit I thought might be worth sharing for folks trying to attain specific greens speeds for special events. This discussion came from Turfnet Associates, Inc. which has a monthly newsletter and a web site. I have consistently found interesting information and wide-ranging discussions in the newsletter. I'm just now accessing the web site. In this information age, a subscription to Turfnet may be worth your while. Contact: Peter L. McCormick, Editor, 21 Brandywine Rd, Skillman, NJ, 08558 or call 1-800-314-7929.*

Chuck Murray, CGCS, Edgewood Country Club, Charleston, W.Va. asks: "Running the risk of covering real old ground, I can't remember ever hearing

anything about the mowing direction when double-cutting greens or rolling greens after mowing.

"In order to negate the 3- to 6-inch difference in Stimp readings down a light stripe versus a dark stripe, we began reverse rolling down the same stripe the mower traveled, but in the opposite direction. Same with double cutting... down the dark stripe removes more leaf, also, than "cross cutting" and more closely equalizes the roll down the light and dark stripes. Is this the common practice with triplex mowing?"

Jeff Michel, CGCS, Mount Vernon CC, Alexandria, Va. replied: "Wow! You think it's old ground, but I've been at this 14 years and never even thought about reverse mowing on a double cut. We have always used perpendicular directions. You stated that the reverse cut

picks up more clippings — how does the reverse roll affect the roll of the ball? This calls for some experimentation on my part!"

Murray fired back: "Jeff, the idea came to me when we purchased our Tri-Rollers for the greens mower back in 1994 and did a lot of Stimp readings to determine for ourselves what benefit we were experiencing. In that process, we found that the rolling could be as much as 6-inch difference on the light stripe versus the dark stripe. Thus, we began to "reverse roll" down the dark stripe and brought that differential down to 2" - 3".

Following that, we found that "reverse mowing" when double cutting "harvested" more crop and reduced the grain. Our greens are predominately Pennncross."

*Credit: Turfnet Monthly, August 1997.*

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# GCSAA + FGCSA + FTGA = POWER

BY RICK TATUM, GCS  
The Forest Golf Club

**G**CSAA, FGCSA and the FTGA. Each of these Associations has its strengths and weaknesses.

The GCSAA is our national association that is strong in numbers of members and money. This association has come a long way in promoting our profession to a higher level.

I applaud the work that these volunteers have contributed to make our industry what it is today. My job is better in many ways due to their efforts.

The GCSAA also has a weakness which is in handling local and state-wide issues. Please do not get me wrong: we have made great strides in

having the GCSAA help with these issues and I am sure we will improve in these areas, but it is a national organization which is mostly concerned with the big picture.

The FGCSA is our state association which also is strong in numbers of members. We use the association to attack local and state issues concerning the golf course superintendent.

I also applaud these volunteers that have donated their time and effort to make my job one of the best in our industry.

The FGCSA does a wonderful job in funding educational seminars to make me a better golf course superintendent. Also, the funding that is used to fight statewide issues has elevated our position in the golf industry.

*Support the people who are supporting you.*

The weakness I feel the FGCSA might have is that the turf industry is bigger than just golf courses. We need to support the turf industry as a whole. This includes the FTGA.

The FTGA awarded over \$635,000 for turf research in the past six years. I know that all this research is not solely directed at golf courses, but we reap the benefit of 80 percent of this research. The FTGA has an annual conference and show which is set up mostly for the benefit of golf course superintendents.

The FTGA is working with the University of Florida to hire a turf coordinator who has a strong background in golf course turf. There are many reasons why we should support the FTGA, but the biggest would be we are stronger together than we are apart.

Last year the GCSAA summoned the state chapters to put in new bylaws. In order to be a member of your state chapter you also had to be a member of the GCSAA. I felt this was a good idea. Support the people who are supporting you. Well, the FTGA is working hard to improve the turf industry in this state, I feel we should work harder at supporting the FTGA. Remember, we are stronger together than apart.

GCSAA + FGCSA + FTGA = POWER!

## On brevity

The Lord's Prayer is 66 words, the Gettysburg Address is 286 words, there are 1,322 words in the Declaration of Independence, but government regulations on the sale of cabbage total 26,911 words.



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*Can we be satisfied being the major stockholder in a company we don't own? I see no alternative...*

**C**ongratulations to new Director of Communications, Joel Jackson! The Florida GCSA created this position at the Winter Board meeting and promptly hired Joel to fill it. I can think of no one more

qualified to assume the responsibilities that will elevate our association to new heights of prestige and effectiveness. Joel brings invaluable and unequalled experience, insight and dedication to this position, and we're lucky to have him.

On that same day, the executive boards of both the FGCSA and FTGA met to

improve communications, clear up misunderstandings and chart a course for the future. I think we accomplished quite a bit, but as always, time constraints left a lot of loose ends. Procedures were implemented to keep everyone better informed so the two associations don't work at cross purposes.

There are those who have some times tried to characterize any discord between the two associations as an us-against-them conflict. Such depictions are absurd, given the numbers of superintendents involved with FTGA. Superintendents or ex-superintendents make up 100 percent of the current FTGA Executive Board and about 50 percent of the Board of Directors.

It is frustrating to have other turfgrass professionals regard FTGA as "just another golf association," at the same time that some superintendents consider any FTGA initiative

not directed specifically at superintendents as unimportant or unnecessary. Disagreements about policy, priorities and direction are to be expected in a state as large and diverse as Florida.

My respect and admiration for any superintendent sacrificing his or her time and effort on behalf of their profession by serving on a board is not diminished because we disagree on an issue.

One of the benefits of having two strong associations like FGCSA and FTGA in the same state is that a greater number of people are able to get involved and contribute to our industry. We just need to communicate better and develop a shared philosophy, while better defining the role each association should play in the development of our profession.

As a past president of FGCSA and a current officer of FTGA involved with one or both organizations for nearly 20 years running, I am guided by the following basic convictions, no matter which organization's hat I'm wearing on a particular day:

1) Florida has a unique environment and most applied and some basic research need to be done in Florida to have validity to our situation.

2) The highly regarded university turfgrass programs in the country all have one thing in common - a strong turfgrass association working closely with a university.

3) The larger and more diverse an organization, the stronger the organization.

Adhering to these principles, I get concerned when either the FTGA or FGCSA Board or a local chapter takes action that moves us in another direction. As superintendents, we operate at a faster pace and under greater pressure than the university system or turfgrass professionals in non-golf related activities, making it

## Building Bridges

### Mark My Words



Mark Jarrell, CGCS  
Assistant Editor

extremely frustrating when we must wait for things to happen, like the of hiring a turf coordinator at the University of Florida.

This should not discourage or dissuade us from continuing to work on the foundations, networks and bridges necessary to achieve our long range goals of having: the strongest and most influential superintendent's association; the largest and best funded turfgrass association and the most respected and productive university turf program in the country.

These may seem like lofty — or even unattainable — goals, but all one has to do is consider the size and scope of the golf and turf industry in Florida to realize that the potential is here to

accomplish all this and more.

Superintendents can't do it all on their own, but we have the drive and the talent to spearhead the effort. As Joe O'Brien of GCSAA put it when trying to analyze the FGCSA's relationship with the FTGA, "Can we be satisfied being the major stockholder in a company we don't own?"

I see no alternative if we're going to continue growing and moving forward. Let's not kid ourselves about where the money comes from for financing our current efforts, or future endeavors. Building bridges and forging alliances with other golf and turf interests and organizations is crucial for our future growth and success.

## BACK ISSUE SEARCH

Still looking for a copy of the April 1974 Florida Green! Dan Jones, editor emeritus of the *Florida Green*, has passed along to me an almost complete collection of issues! We are missing one issue, April 1974. If any of you packrats out there have a copy, please send it to me. I would like to have the complete collection bound in hard back covers to preserve the magazine's history.

## Duststorms Got Members Trading Carts For Camels?



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profoundest Hell. Receive thy new possessor: one  
who brings a mind not to be changed by place or  
time. The mind is its own place, and in itself can  
make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.*

John Milton from Paradise Lost

**T**ired of hearing about El Nino causing every problem except hair loss and bad breath? Me too. There have been a lot of lost paradises and unhappy fields this past winter as golf courses fell prey to marginal growing conditions overcast skies and record rainfall.

**The good news is...** February has been sunnier and drier in most areas of the state. The bad news is... wetter than normal conditions are forecast for spring, but who has been able to predict the weather lately? A record cold spell in March! Man it's tough trying to keep a golf

course looking perfect under these roller coaster conditions.

**The good news is...** we received a lot of information from the GCSAA, the USGA Green Section and the University of Florida to help explain the effects of these abnormal conditions on turf quality. The bad news is... some club officials take one glance at the facts and toss them aside calling them excuses instead of explanations. You can lead a person to the facts, but you can't make them think.

**The good news is...** some concerned golfers learned more about our business because of this situation. The bad news is... more superintendents will be put through unnecessary hell by shortsighted and hardheaded people who still "demand" instead of "understand."

**The good news is...** course conditions will improve with better weather. The bad news is... well usually there is no bad news for good weather conditions, unless it doesn't happen fast

enough for those impatient souls who expect perfection in everything and everyone except themselves.

There's more good and bad news than just the weather and its complications.

**The bad news is...** EPA is trying to take some short cuts in reviewing pesticides under the Food Quality Protection Act. That could lead to premature removal of uses from product labels. The good news is... manufacturers and end users are uniting in a grass roots campaign to keep Congress informed of the facts. Letter writing voters have influence.

**There's also bad news** looming for MSMA users as EPA and DEP get gung-ho about arsenic levels on golf courses. The good news is... naturally occurring background arsenic levels (it is a natural element, you know) are often higher than what EPA wants to legislate. Now that would be a neat trick if they can pull that one off.

Be assured there will lots of discussion on this issue before it's over. In the meantime watch what you do around your mix and load sites, folks. That's where samples keep coming back positive.

**And perhaps the best good news is...** the University of Florida has finally found a turf coordinator for IFAS. After two years of sifting through applications and resumes and conducting interviews, and then having to re-group after the first search process came up empty, the university named Dr. John Cisar from the IFAS Research and Education Center in Fort Lauderdale to head the turf program.

Dr. Cisar has probably been one of the most prolific researchers on turf-related projects in the state in recent years, focusing on the impacts of turf management procedures on the environment with lots of positive results for our industry.

You won't hear any bad news from me on this decision. The only negative was that the process took too long, but now that's old news not bad news. Good luck, Doc! We're with you 100 percent even if IFAS can't do anything about the weather.

After all this if your golfers still complain, just tell them I said, "To 'El' with it!"

## 'Hell' Niño and other Good News - Bad News

### Green Side Up



Joel Jackson, CGCS  
Editor