

Not-so-Instant Replays Rewinding Year 2005

As I sit at my computer on the Sunday after Thanksgiving, it distresses me to realize there were more turkeys on the football field with whistles and zebra stripes than there were on America's dining room tables.

Granted there was a lot of football on TV the last few days, but the number of bad calls seems to increase with each passing week. Even instant replay doesn't help much with the bad calls turning games around more than the teams on the field.

I think the game is too fast now for all the gray-beards they have calling the games. A former NFL official whom I know — and who worked five Super Bowls — told me that you have to work in a major conference for 10 years before you even get a sniff of working in the big show.

AS IT LIES



Jim Walker

So, my point is? Out with the old and in with the new on the football fields of America. Let's get guys in those Zebra outfits who can run, see, and have a brain in their heads.

It's Masters Sunday, 16th green; DiMarco leads Woods by 2 shots. Tiger hits it in a horrible spot to try to salvage par with the traditional Sunday placement. The chip plops on the green, trickles across the slope feeding down the hill and then, in slow motion with the Nike logo on display to the entire golfing world, the ball drops into the hole for birdie, paving the way for Tiger to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat and win his fourth Masters title.

Bad call of the year award goes to the officials who ruled that Michele Wie dropped her ball improperly, paving the way for her to be disqualified. Remember the re-enactment took place the next day and was guided by TV footage from a bad angle. And yes, the infraction was pointed out by an armchair knucklehead. Reminds me of the time the Walrus was disqualified for building a stance by placing a towel on the ground to keep his pants from getting ruined by the muddy area where his ball had come to rest.

While we're at it, let's get the USGA to re-evaluate some of the goofy rules we have in our wonderful game and let common sense rewrite the book. Think it doesn't need to happen? Remember the time 20 people who moved a boulder the size of Rhode Island out of Tiger's line of

sight under the loose impediment rule? No penalty? I rest my case.

How fantastic was it to see Michael Campbell win the US Open and break down in tears of happiness and relief that his career was reborn by that gusty performance?

How marvelous and funny was it to see Fred Funk slip into a skirt after being out-driven by Annika at the Skins Game? Then, knock it on the par-five ninth in two and roll in an eagle putt for \$225,000... and a new Explorer for some lucky duck who picked his name out of the hat and thought to himself, "Great, I've got the guy who was out-hit by the girl a few holes ago." This is the same Doctor of Funk who won the Players Championship in March, and will turn 50 in a few months. Go Freddie. Go Terps. P.S. On Sunday Fred won every hole on the back nine and finished with \$925,000 for the event. Not bad for a guy who averaged only 275 off the tee.

Back to the grid-iron: Another bad year for Hurricane fans who thought that since all their players were out on bail or parole, they would have a great chance to win the National Championship. They went to Tallahassee for their season opener, played a dreadful game and lost to "Aw shucks, it wern't nuthin" Bowden. Then they win eight straight, culminating with a butt-whipping of Virginia Tech at Blacksburg, only to return to the Orange Bowl the next week and get out-played and out-coached by the Rambling Wreck. Their lack-

luster performance in that game brought former Cane Warren Sapp to call it an "embarrassment and disgrace to the program." I guess it's not all bad since the Gators handed the 'Noles their fourth loss of the season, which kind of made Urban (sprawl) (Oscar) Meyer's year.

Can anyone stop the Colts? Remember, the season will be over before this is read, so I'll go out on a limb and say, "maybe." I can say that if anyone duplicates the Dolphins perfect season, then Peyton Manning and Tony Dungy are the type of good guys who should do it.

Wasn't it great to see George's \$175 million All-Star team *not* make it to the World Series again?

Tiger won \$10 million again this year. Annika won 10 times this year. She only played in 20.

I almost forgot to bash the Dolphins. No, I won't kick a sick dog when it's down. I did notice Jerry Glanville is still alive and coaching in Hawaii. South Florida has the same big hotels and white sand beaches. The weather is about the same, although it's hotter in Miami in the summertime. Maybe there's still a chance and maybe there's hope for the Fins.

Seems our beloved Marlins are threatening to leave our fair city again. The taxpayers are still being stubborn about building that \$350 million stadium with the retractable roof. And the city, county and state governments won't pony up either.

Happy 2006 to all of you and your families.

The New Year is upon us and life goes on. There will be good days and there will be bad days. That's life.

We've all heard the cliché, "It's not what happens to us, but how we handle what happens to us." So, how are you going to handle these chunks of reality that surely will happen to us in the very near future?

I mention these coming bites of reality because you need to be communicating their possible

effects on your turf management programs so you can say, "I told you so." And you need to be checking out possible alternative solutions, supporting turf research and getting your owner and members to speak to regulators and politicians. Doesn't sound like much fun does it?

Sometimes reality does bite. Here are three items that may have vary-

ing effects on your course conditioning and ultimately maybe your job retention.

NO MORE NEMACUR

One thing we know for sure: Nematicur will be gone as of May 31, 2007. As far as I know, the only other available product that offers fairly effective control is Curfew, and its slit-injection method can be problematic depending on your root system. Green applications continue to be tested and modified to reduce and/or eliminate possible damage from the process. The product isn't cheap, but cost becomes relative when you need a solution to your "tode" problem.

There are some anecdotal reports of various organic/biological products offering some control of nematodes. Research by Dr. Billy Crow at UF has uncovered a mustard-seed product, but it isn't in commercial production. Are you prepared to modify cultural practices to ease the problem if you can't afford the chemical solution? Are you preparing your members for the possibility of raising heights of cut and using more water and fertilizers to outgrow the damage? Might be a good time to talk about the future before it becomes reality.

METHYL BROMIDE WARS

Second is the geopolitical football, methyl bromide. They say it's an ozone depleter and even if planet earth releases more MeBr into the atmosphere than man's use, the USA and other developed nations must cut back on their use of the product. Meanwhile, Third World, or developing, countries may use more; so it's bad for the environment but OK to use if you're having trouble competing with the U.S. and others.

So my take is that this is a political game about redistribution of wealth and not really about scientific fact, but the *reality* is that we in turf are like-

ly to be hoping for allocations from current stockpiles of material manufactured before the phase-out. It may last my lifetime, but will it be available for you 20- or 30-something supers? Who knows? The point is, we have no viable alternative product that is as safe as MeBr. Construction and renovation of golf courses may require much more time, effort and money for growing in. Better start letting owners, developers and members know about this potential setback.

ARSENIC AND OLD MSMA

And last is the latest hot potato, concern over arsenic levels and the use of the herbicide, MSMA. You can put a soil or water sample in boiling acid and reduce it to calculate the total arsenic in the sample. The trouble is, you can't tell what the source of the arsenic is. Arsenic is a naturally occurring element like carbon, calcium, magnesium, iron, silicon, lead, gold, silver, etc. Besides being found in a monosodium methanearsonate molecule, arsenic can be found in rock formations, mineral deposits, sea shells, mulch, treated lumber, soil (native and exotic hauled in for construction), reclaimed water and fertilizer.

I mention fertilizer last because if there's one thing we apply more than MSMA, it is fertilizer. Food for thought as EPA and Florida regulators take a hard look at the possible link between the herbicide and the high levels of arsenic associated with golf course samples. MSMA is the only currently available herbicide that offers some control of tropical signalgrass and it's the primary crabgrass control for many.

Are you ready for possible limits on the use of MSMA? EPA is currently doing a re-registration study on MSMA and, given the emotional baggage that the word "arsenic" generates, the pressure is on regulators to come up some plan of action and it likely translates to label changes at the least and banishment at the worst. If you depend on MSMA to control some of the more persistent grassy weeds, you need to be preparing your chain of command that this tool may soon be removed from the toolbox.

The reality is that we will continue to lose products — especially old generic chemistry — as new specific products are developed. And in many cases that loss is not a bad thing environmentally. But the reality is that your programs will change and costs will go up. The threshold levels of infestations may have to change and providing flawless, pristine conditions may be a thing of the past.

As the steward of nature's resources *and* the club's financial resources, it falls on you to provide the best playing conditions possible. Meanwhile keep your chain of command informed and diplomatically give them a bite of reality so they aren't in denial when these products go away and some pest effects are more noticeable. ■

Reality Bites

GREEN SIDE UP



Joel Jackson, CGCS