



# TURFGRASS MATTERS

October/November 1999

Volume 71, Number 4

## Slope and Ratings--Know the Score

by

Keith Williams

Slope? Sure I know slope; when I go skiing I can choose the bunny slope, the black diamond slope or something in between. Ratings? Don't you mean what Siskel and Ebert used to do or are you referring to the "Bo Derek" kind of rating?

The United States Golf Association's rating is the evaluation of a course's playing difficulty or ease for a "scratch" or zero-handicap amateur golfer under "normal" conditions. The ratings are derived by using variables and formulas that a trained team of USGA raters obtains during a survey of the course.

Basing handicaps on course ratings alone puts lesser golfers at a distinct disadvantage when playing at more difficult venues because scores tend to rise more than the increase in ratings. For this reason the USGA implemented the slope handicap system in the 1980's, and all amateur golf associations authorized by the USGA now use it. Under the slope system, the golfer's traditional handicap has been replaced by a USGA handicap index (a decimal number). The slope system takes into account both the ways a "bogey" golfer plays the course and ten factors such as hazards, green speed, topography, etc.

The higher your handicap index, the greater the impact of "slope" will be. For instance, a golfer with an index of 19.8 plays a course with a 113 slope rating

would be entitled to 20 strokes. The same player playing a course with a slope rating of 88 would receive only 15 strokes, and if he played a more difficult course with a slope rating of 138, he would receive 24 strokes.

The basic goal of Equitable Stroke Control (ESC) is to eliminate exceptionally high hole scores. The USGA provides tables to show the maximum hole scores.

Course rating takes into account the yardage and other obstacles, and is usually a number around par, like 69.8. A course with a par of 72 and a rating of 72.1 would have a differential of 0.1, while a course with a par of 71 and a course rating of 72.1 would have a differential of 1.1. Therefore, according to course rating, the second course is the more difficult of the two.

Slope rating numbers translate to this: the higher the number, the more difficult the course. Nationally, the slope rating for a course of standard difficulty is 113, but many courses in the Mid-Atlantic have slopes in the high 130's and low 140's. The highest recognized slope rating is 155, which belong to Koolau Golf Course in Hawaii and International Golf Course in Bolton, Massachusetts.

The actual rating variables are as follows: Distance is the most influential element in the equation but distance

numbers alone is not used. Wind, roll, dogleg and elevation are the four factors that can affect the distance variable. Ten different obstacle factors are also used in the process; each rated according to their respective severity. They include:

Bunkers-greenside and fairway bunkers, depth of bunkers

Fairway-size of landing area, length of carry over rough to get to fairway

Recoverability and Rough-length of rough, severity of the green surrounds

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## President's Message

Walter C. Montross, CGCS



As we approach the end of another year, I never cease to be amazed at how fast time seems to go by. As one gets older time becomes a blur, was it only yesterday that the kids were really kids and not the young adults I now have in my household. Was it only yesterday that I graduated from college determined to make my mark in the golf course profession. And was it really just yesterday that I completed my first term as President of the Mid-Atlantic in 1989. As I sit and pen this missive, it is not to admonish everyone to stop and "smell the roses", it is to reflect back over a career and remember the people I have met. I find it a shame that many people have no interest in our history or the people who made it such. At our recent golf championship, the Association honored a group of individuals who played a part in creating the Association and developing its history. George Cornell Sr., Robert Lynch, Alex Watson, C.G.C.S. and Bernard Heilig were these honored individuals and their accomplishments have been duly noted. However, there were so many others I was fortunate to have known over the years, who also were equally instrumental in our history. Some of these fellows have since passed on, but in my mind I am so much the richer for having known them. Through a series of articles in our newsletter, Lee Dieter has been providing a little insight into our history and its membership. I thank him for his efforts

today and the many years ago that he made me see the importance of participating in the Association's business, as well as, not forgetting those who paved the way.

Many thanks go out to Mike Larsen and Woodmont CC for hosting the September meeting. The course was superb as usual and Mike, you may have created some converts to Zoysia grass fairways. Also my thanks to Byron Lash and the Lowes Island Club for hosting the annual golf tournament in October. It was a pleasure to see the new Arthur Hills course and the job you did growing it in.

I just couldn't let an article go by without commenting on the weather. It is amazing or confounding to think that this year will be just another average one when the data is finally averaged out. The drought of the century followed by 16 1/2" of rain from September till now is Mothers Nature way of balancing things out. As I started out my article by saying we shouldn't forget ..... I will do my best to forget the weather. As Little Orphan Annie says, "the sun will come out tomorrow ..... or maybe the next day or the next.

Lastly, since I hold the pen I must mention one of my pet peeves. How

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### Turfgrass Matters Committee

Tim R. Norris, CGCS - Editor  
Carmen Gianinni \* Keith Williams

## Bullets from the Boardroom

MAAGCS Secretary - Mike Evans



Heartfelt thanks to Chris Ayers, CGCS, and Dean Graves, CGCS, for all of their efforts on behalf of MAAGCS superintendents during this summer's drought. Chris and Dean arranged a meeting with Governor Glendening's Drought Emergency Committee to voice the concerns of Maryland superintendents regarding the mandatory water restrictions. Thank you, gentlemen, for your tireless efforts!



The Board of Directors has approved the formation of a new committee, Government Relations, within the Board, beginning in the year 2000. The Government Relations Director will be responsible for effectively communicating with government officials on a variety of environmental issues relating to golf courses. The Government Relations Director will also keep the MAAGCS membership apprised of approved and pending legislation that may affect our golf course operations. The Government Relations position will be created without adding an additional seat on the Board, but by restructuring current responsibilities within the Board.



In an attempt to clearly delineate and define responsibilities to ensure peak performance, the Board of Directors will formulate written guidelines, or standard operating procedures, for each committee and officer's position on the Board of Directors. These guidelines, to be hammered out in November, will be in place for the new Board in the year 2000.



The Industrial Advisory Committee, consisting of Dave Cammarota (Egypt Farms), Lance Ernst (TESCO), and Harry Fridley (Green Meadows Turf Supply), and MAAGCS Past President Mike Gilmore, met with the Board of

Directors at the October meeting. The Board unanimously agreed to continue the Industrial Advisory Committee, which will remain under the chairmanship of the Past President, Messrs. Cammarota, Ernst, and Fridley have graciously volunteered to continue on the committee for the year 2000, after which time, the affiliate representatives to the committee will be determined by the Class F Committee serves as a liaison between the Class F membership and the Board of Directors.



The Board of Directors has approved the issuance of membership certificates beginning with the year 2000 membership renewals. A membership card will also be issued with the meeting schedule for the year on the back of the card.



The Board of Directors unanimously approved a \$500 donation to the "Friends of Curly" Benefit Golf Tournament to raise money for Preston Licklider, longtime superintendent at Winchester Country Club, who is suffering from a malignant brain tumor. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family, Preston.



At the Board's direction, Secretary Michael Evans sent a letter to GCSAA President David Fearis, CGCS, offering our Chapter's support of GCSAA's stance on recent advertising tactics by IGM. IGM mailed a solicitation to club officials throughout the country offering up to \$50,000 in new equipment to golf courses as an enticement to have IGM manage their golf course maintenance operations for three years. We are in lockstep with the GCSAA that this solicitation is offensive, misleading, and unethical.

### SLOPE

continued from page 1

Psychological---number of severe obstacles on given holes

Green Target---size of green, length of shot to green, firmness of the surface, blind approach

Green Surface---flat or contoured, speed of the green(s)

Water Hazards---forced carries, hazards near the green, proximity of hazards to landing area

Topography---downhill, uphill, sidehill stances, uphill or downhill shots to the green

Out-of Bounds/Extreme Rough---proximity of OB or extreme rough to landing areas or greens, forced carries and associated lengths for the carry

Trees---denseness, proximity to landing area, recoverability ease or difficulty

After being rated for the first time, a new course should be

re-rated every three years over a nine-year period. Mature established courses are routinely re-rated every ten years or any time significant revisions/renovations are made.

Slope ratings and course ratings for all courses in Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, North Carolina, and South Carolina are available from Golfnet ([www.golfnet.com](http://www.golfnet.com) or 5272 River Road Bethesda, MD 20816).

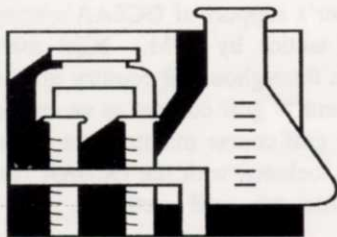
A more detailed study of this topic will be offered in New Orleans at the GCSAA Golf Course Conference and Show in a seminar entitled "USGA Golf Course Rating System." This seminar will be conducted by Peter Dennis, Manager, Course Rating Service, and will be presented on Monday February 14, 2000.

The author would like to acknowledge Golfnet and the Washington Metropolitan Golf Association for their help researching this article.

## Editor's Letter

**Tim R. Norris, CGCS, Director of Communications**

I have experienced a roller coaster of emotions recently. As I make my way around the golf course each day I am awestruck by the beauty I see. The rich reds and vibrant yellows of the foliage contrasting with the green turf is truly a picture that comes from someone greater than us. I don't believe that there is a better time to enjoy a golf course in the Mid Atlantic area than in the autumn. Yet at the same time we have heard of the tragic death of Payne Stewart and others due to some mechanical fluke. As I watched the memorial service for Payne Stewart there was a common thread from all of his friends. Here was a man that had experienced ups and downs in his life. It seems most of the downs came when he was putting his professional life in front of his personal life. By all accounts, Payne had taken time over the past year or two to reassess his priorities. When he put his personal life in order, his professional life soared. Perhaps during the off-season we can all think about those individuals and things, family, home and religion, that are really important in our lives. I was discussing some of these issues with my Mom while she was visiting and she said something that really struck home. Are our jobs a way to "make a living" or do we use the resources our jobs provide to "make a life"? Don't put off telling your loved ones how you feel because as we all saw, tomorrow is never a sure thing.



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GCSAA Chapter Delegates Meeting Report

by

Nick Vance, CGCS

During the first session of the meeting chapter delegates expressed their concerns about meeting attendance and participation on the chapter level. Some of the points brought out were:

- \*The average attendance at a majority of affiliated chapter meetings is 30%-35%
- \*Higher profile courses don't want to host meetings because they need to keep the course available for members
- \*There is a lack of interest by members to serve on local boards
- \*The same core group attend meetings
- \*Superintendents are expected to attend more club board meetings, committee meetings and have family responsibilities that make it difficult to schedule chapter meetings

Some of the success stories and potential opportunities to strengthen chapter involvement/participation and increase meeting attendance are as follows:

- \*Hold joint meetings with other chapters
- \*Survey members to identify their needs, particularly regarding education

\*Appoint a committee to visit inactive members, ask why they are not attending meetings and participating in chapter activities, and ask how the chapter can better serve them

- \*Focus on providing the highest quality education possible
- \*Mix up members when doing pairings for chapter golf outings so they will become better acquainted
- \*At chapter meetings, encourage members to share problems and solutions they are experiencing at their golf courses and focus on geographical issues
- \*Invite superintendents to share ideas on recent projects they have completed

Chapter meeting attendance is a problem everywhere, but the Mid-Atlantic is on the right track to resolving the problem.

The Membership Standards Resource Group and consultants from the Franklin Covey Co., presented the voting delegates with a history of the Professional Development Initiative (PDI), the goals,

mission and concepts of the initiative, progress since the initiative was first introduced to the chapter delegates at the 1996 meeting, current projects, and future plans to advance PDI.

The Professional Development Initiative is being undertaken to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of the Professional superintendent that will contribute toward improved playing conditions and the enjoyment of the game. The success of the PDI will be measured by achieving the goals of:

- \*Increased salaries of golf course superintendents
- \*Enhanced job security of golf course superintendents
- \*Intensified recognition by employers and influential golfers of the golf course superintendent as the key member of the golf course management team
- \*Improved job opportunities for golf

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## Be Careful What You Ask For

Many of us spend a great deal of time wishing things were different. We dream of a "better job," more responsibility, less of this, and more of that. Sometimes, the things we spend our energy longing for actually do (or would) improve the quality of our life. Other times, however, the very things we wish for are hardly worth the tradeoffs, or the effort. For this reason, I suggest you be really careful what you ask for.

The purpose of this strategy isn't to encourage you to stop dreaming of, or working toward, a better life, but to remind you that sometimes your life is pretty darn good exactly the way it is. My goal here is to remind you to carefully think through what it is you think you want, because you might end up getting it, which is often more than you bargained for - more frustration, more grief, more travel, more responsibility, more conflict, more demands on your time, and so forth. When you think in these terms, it often helps you reconnect with your gratitude and realize that perhaps things aren't as bad as we sometimes make them out to be.

I've met plenty of people who spent years focused on how much better their lives were going to be when certain things occurred - i.e., when they were finally promoted to various positions-so much so that they took for granted the good parts of the position they already had. In other words, they were so focused on what was wrong with their careers that they failed to enjoy and appreciate the gifts they were enjoying all along.

For example, a man I knew dreamed of a job he felt would be "so much better" within the same company he was working with. He lobbied for that job for quite some time, constantly complaining about his current position. It wasn't until he finally secured that job that he realized the major tradeoffs that were involved. It was true that he had a bit more prestige and a slightly higher salary, yet he was forced to travel several days a week, often much more than that. He missed his

three kids terribly and started missing important events-soccer games, music performances, teacher conferences, and other special dates. In addition, his relationship with his wife became strained as their relatively peaceful routine was set aside for the alleged "better life." He was also forced to scale way back on his much-loved exercise routine due to his busier, less flexible schedule.

A woman I knew worked hard to convince her boss that she deserved to telecommute instead of coming into the office. She succeeded. The problem was, she never realized (until a month later) that, despite the dreaded traffic, she actually loved coming into the city each day. This was structure, her chance to be with people. She also missed lunch at local cafes, her favorite music that she listened to on the way to work, and other taken-for-granted simple pleasures. After a while, she began to feel trapped in her own home.

Other people crave power or fame. Only after they achieve it do they realize that the lack of any real privacy is a drag. Instead of anonymity, which most of us take for granted, people are now looking over their shoulders. They are often exposed to more criticism and closer scrutiny.

I want to emphasize that I'm not taking a negative stance on any of these tradeoffs. Often, making more money is crucial, and outweighs any other consideration you might have. For many people, traffic is almost unbearable and would be worth avoiding at almost any price. Some people love the spotlight and the increased visibility. The important point here isn't the specifics, or any sort of value judgement, but the recognition of the relevance of asking yourself the important questions-"What am I really asking for, and why?"

When thinking about your job or career, it's important to consider what's right and good about your work in addition to focusing on what might be better. Feeling satisfied or being happy doesn't



mean you aren't still working hard to make your career as successful as possible. You can have both-happiness and drive-without sacrificing sanity.

Keep in mind that more responsibility might be a great thing, but it could very well lead to less personal freedom, privacy, and so forth. Similarly, a better paying position might make you feel more financially secure and it might be worth it-but you may give up other things that you haven't considered, or that you simply take for granted. It's all just food for thought. Remember, be careful what you ask for, because you might just get it-and more.

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President

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often to you receive a phone message that ends with the caller leaving a phone number at the speed of light. I don't know about you but I often times have to play the message back numerous times to comprehend the number. Please when leaving your phone number ... "SLOW DOWN"... you might just get a returned call.

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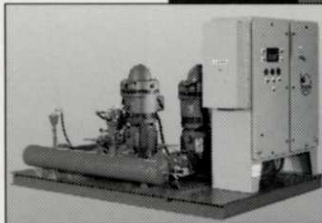


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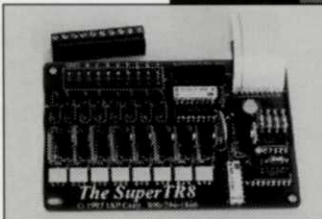
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## Delegate Meeting

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course superintendents

\*Substantiated credentials that can be marketed to employers through improved playing conditions

Franklin Covey representatives also demonstrated the HR Software, a tool that supports and measures superintendents' professional development. Through the use of this software, individuals complete a competency-based performance assessment that measures their proficiency in golf course management. This software should be available for demonstrations at the Conference and Show in New Orleans in 2000.

The Membership Standards Resource Group (MSRG) then presented a proposed model for a new classification system. The association will remain inclusive for all individuals who wish to be members. However, there is a need to develop a BRAND that can be marketed

to employers.

The table on page 8 shows that model and the PDI Grandfathering Considerations. There will be a lot of questions and I will try to answer them, but the best answers will come from the representatives attending the March 2000 MAAGCS Chapter meeting.

Other items that were discussed were:  
**The Public Relations Initiative**-An update on GCSAA's involvement in public relations programs and efforts. These included the leadership survey that was conducted at the 1999 show and published in several national golf magazines in a fold out brochure., the 30-second TV spot during the John Deere Classic (which received a lot of criticism from the members, but accolades from the golfing public), and the developing of a PR tool kit.

**The Renaming of the Association**-Superintendents around the country and all the delegates at the meeting participated in

an exercise that listed names that best describes what we do. GCSAA is trying to come up with the name that best describes our profession NOW and can get the most recognition for the position.

**The Leadership Institute**-Delegates reviewed a plan to implement a Leadership Institute. This fifteen month intensive training program will train and prepare golf course superintendents for future leadership positions both locally and nationally. Participants will learn how to: be mentors, facilitate effective meetings, communicate effectively, utilize data to make decisions -(assess trends that affect chapters and GCSAA), create effective networks and lead strategic planning. Affiliated chapters will be encouraged to provide funding for their members to attend and participate in this program. Some funding assistance may be provided through GCSAA. An individual who participates in the institute will complete the five-year requirements for re-certification. The estimated cost will be \$1,000 to participate.



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## Professional Development Initiative

Comparison of Current and Proposed Requirements							
Requirements	Current C	Current B	Future B	Current A	Future A	Current Certified	Future Certified
Dues	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Job Responsibilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Competency Assessment	No	No	No	No	**Validation of Competencies	Old 6-hour exam plus course attesting	Validation of competencies at a higher proficiency levels than A plus course attesting
Experience	No	No	No	3 years as a Supt.	3 years as a Superintendent	Sliding scale; 3-8 years depending on degree	3 years as Class A
Valid Pesticide License	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Continuing Education for Entry Eligibility	No	No	No	No	No	Yes; sliding scale	Will be required to finish at least one 3-year renewal cycle as Class A
On-going Professional Development	No	No	No	No	Amount TBD and includes mandatory chapter and/or civic participation and other continuing education. Based on renewal cycle of three years. Must complete self-assessment every three years.	Yes	Amount TBD but more than Class A. Also includes chapter and civic participation and continuing education. Based on three-year renewal cycle. Must complete self-assessment every three years.
Formal Education	No	No	No	No	2-year turf or 4-year other	No; Experience and CEUs required in the absence of formal education	2-year turf or 4-year other

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# MAAGCS Golf Notes

## Annual Championship Results

### Superintendent Flight

Net		Gross	
1st Sean Remington	63	Dave Horton	72
2nd Steve Cohoon	65	Corey Haney	75
3rd Nick Vance	66	Ed Brown	75
4th Paul Masimore	67	Bill Shirk	80

### Affiliate Flight

Net		Gross	
1st Jim Cervone	70	Dan Schlegal	75
2nd Michael Peny	72	Eric Ault	81
3rd Anthony Cusat	74	Paul Tideman	82

### Closest to Pin

#3 Scott Johnson	#7 Jim McHenry
#13 Scott Wagner	#17 Sean Remington

### Straightest Drive

#8 Steve Cohoon

### Long Drive Champion

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## News & Notes

### New Members

#### Class A

Joseph Hubbard, CGCS Belmont Country Club

#### Class C

Jeff Ashley Westwood Country Club  
 Alex Necker Pilgrim's Oak Golf Course  
 Jennifer Orem Diamond Ridge Golf Course

#### Class D

Brandon Fouche University of Maryland  
 Brian Moreau Wakefield Village  
 Jason Small Woody's Golf Range  
 Erik Sokolowski Reston National Golf Course

#### Class F

Bruce Chancellor Renoscapes, Inc.

Tom Cross

Anthony Cusat

William Murphy

Michael Peny

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### Congratulations

To Jim & Kelly Cervone upon the arrival of Anthony James.

To Dan & Kim Schlegal upon the arrival of Lauren Elizabeth

To John & Mary McDonald upon their marriage

To Tom & Carol Wunch upon their marriage

### Get Well Wishes

To Francis Graves mother of Dean Graves

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## Advisory Group Formed

The Mid-Atlantic Board of Directors has begun a process of creating a better dialog with our commercial membership. The Board recognizes that a strong partnership between our members who manage golf courses and the vendors who support us can only strengthen our association. This concept and how we structure it are still in the planning stages. Under the guidance of Mike Gilmore, Past President and with the assistance of some of our industry partners, we hope to create an Industrial Advisory Group (IAG) that will bring a better understanding and working relationship between us all. David Cammarota from Egypt Farms, Lance Ernst from TESCO and Harry Fridley from Green Meadows have offered their assistance to us in formulating this plan. If you have any suggestions or comments, please contact any of these individuals for further clarification. As the plan unfolds the Board will keep the MAAGCS membership fully informed.

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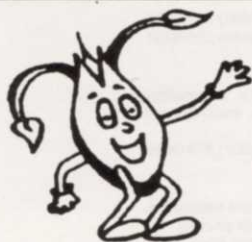
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