

Rain Ruination of Spring

When the song asks, "what do you do on a rainy night in Rio?", there's no problem. You hit the bright lights, live it up, booze and laugh the troubled weather right out of your mind.

But how about a rainy day at Charles River, Salem or Quaboag? That's when your troubles just begin.

Sad story is, though, that this spring the troubles wrought by an overabundance of rain across New England have put golf up the creek without the proverbial paddle.

Midway through the month of May, the statistics on rainfall were staggering. At that wet point in time, the figures showed that the area was running 10.6 inches above normal. Not only is that staggering, it's sickening.

"Do you want a good barometer on the situation?" one veteran golf course superintendent offered. "We (New England) could go without a drop of rain until the first week in August and reach that point when the total amount of rainfall equals the norm. I haven't checked this out, but we may be getting more precipitation than the Rain Forest in Puerto Rico."

This too-much, too-soon syndrome clouding playing and maintaining conditions has had a two-fold effect.

From a financial standpoint, it has been crippling for the public and municipal golf course community.

Obviously, pay-as-you-play courses are more financially dependent on weather than the private clubs which have a fixed income because of dues-paying members. On those layouts, it matters not how much a member plays even though it can be trying on the mental and physical release he gains knocking the little white ball out of sight.

The publinxers have suffered through a more unnatural state of weather affairs because of Mother Nature's uncanny timing. Through the weekend of May 22, rain had fallen on a Saturday and/or Sunday for 12 consecutive weeks.

"The only way we can recoup our losses is another form of dependence on Mother Nature," one public course owner explained. "In order for me to bail out, we're going to need one heck of an extended season. This means a long fall and a later-arriving winter. So, the weather pattern in October, November and even December will have a telling effect on my financial status. A couple of early snowfalls and I'll be making tracks for the loan department at the nearest bank."

There's one more bitter pill that public course owners may have to swallow. And, again, the quirks of nature hold the key. This malady would hit those layouts without irrigation facilities.

"What's happening now is that the turf and soil are being spoiled by all this rain," a worried owner observed. "Somewhere along the line, things even out. This could be in the form of drought conditions. If we have long spells of dry weather, fairways could be burned to a crisp. I realize courses without irrigation are in the minority. However,

they're out there and they're praying that July and August don't turn out to be parched months."

And what of the superintendent's plight in what had evolved into a weather crisis several weeks into spring?

"Regardless of having irrigation or not, incessant rain sets my conditioning program back," a wary super told. "Let's face it. The key periods in maintenance are spring and fall. One you use to prepare the course for the damage that's ahead. The other you utilize to undo the damage that has occurred through the summer."

Therefore, unlike the public course owner who can hope for prime weather in autumn, the superintendent has no means of making up conditioning time lost because of too much rain.

"I'm lucky in one respect," the same super advised. "I won't have to knuckle under should we get some reverse action when it never rains. My irrigation will take care of that problem. However, I'm from the old school. I still believe that natural irrigation is much better than the kind automation forces on the grasses."

So, weather conditions in the spring of 1983 have been a disaster no matter how you slice them. The public course

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Upcoming Dates to Remember

- June 22 UMASS. Turf Field Day
contact Joe Troll
- July 11 GCSANE meeting, Marshfield C.C.
Host - Mel O'Kelly
- Aug. 2 GCSANE Meeting, Weston Golf Club
Host - Don Hearn, CGCS
- Sept. 12 GCSANE Meeting, Salem C.C.
Host - Kip Tyler
- Oct. 4 GCSANE Meeting, Kittansett Golf Club
Host - Len Blodgett
- Oct. 11 GCSANE Member - 3 guest, Blue Hill C.C.
Host - Dave Barber, CGCS
- Oct. 14 Pro-Supt. Tournament, Brae Burn C.C.
Host - Bob Grant
- Nov. 1 GCSANE Meeting, Tatnuck Golf Club
Host - Steve Chiavoroli

Golf Course Superintendents Association

'In One Ear and ...'

Okay, golf course superintendent of New England, brace yourselves.

For the next several weeks, you'll be under attack because the natives (your members) have returned from their winter golf wars where the sun always shines and playing conditions reflect that precious commodity.

Therefore, your ears could be buzzing while the complainers adjust to their regular golfing playgrounds and the vagaries of an uncompromising weather thrust which usually brings out the beast in them. So, roll with the punches when you hear:

"Hey, I missed a four-inch putt today on account of that little piece of grass clipping you forgot to remove after mowing. You'll never see that happen at Dorset. They really give us clean carpets. I haven't missed anything under three feet there in the last 10 years."

"All right, who set the cup on the 13th hole? You ever been to Lost Tree? maybe we should send you down there for a crash course in cup placement. If anybody sank a putt on 13 today, I'll buy the house in the 19th hole a drink. I've seen three-foot sidehill lies before but never on greens. That hole cost me a buck and a-half!"

"Does that guy, who mowed the seventh fairway, actually get paid for what he does around here? What did he use, a letter opener? If that ever happened at Pinehurst, the superintendent would fire that jerk on the spot. Next time tell him the fairway's that part of the hole where you get a perfect lie. I took more divots than a well-digger trying to get my ball out of that stuff."

"Here it is June and we're still playing winter rules. What have you been doing all winter, reading Playboy? And just think, two weeks ago I was playing at Dorado Beach and never had to touch my ball. We were hitting drives off the fairway. I don't know. Maybe we should hire a bunch of sheep and get this place back in shape."

"Boy, isn't it nice to be back home. This place looks like a cyclone hit it. No grass, greens bumpy, tees ragged. What have you been doing, cultivating a depressed area?"

How come they don't have this trouble at Boca Raton? That's paradise compared to this bombed-out place. If I hadn't paid my dues one month in advance to get that 10 percent discount, I'd resign right here and now."

"It sure beats the devil out of me why we should expect

Rain ...continued from page 1

owner is about to swim in red ink while the superintendent cools his heels while his work remains undone.

Sure, it's not nice to fool Mother Nature. But she's been going overboard fooling the New England golf scene. For that matter, maybe we should all take a tip from that rainy night in Rio solution. Let it rain, put on our dancing shoes and say, "the hell with it."

Gerry Finn

to move five yards back on that eighth tee just because you're having a problem filling in the divot holes from last year's play. Boy, I wish I never left Harbortown. There's not a bare spot in one of those tees. Make a divot and there's a guy ready with seeds and a watering can to fill it in. I thought our budget took care of those things. It's big enough to hire a landscape outfit to follow every player around the course."

"When are you going to cut down that rough behind the 17th? I lost a ball in that elephant grass today. Sure, I may have overclubbed but what difference does that make? Everything's supposed to be clear behind the greens. You should see how they groom the rough at Ocean Reef. I aim for it there. That's how perfect it is. Here, I'll give you their superintendent's number. Give him a call sometime, so we won't have to be buying balls all the time."

"What happened over the winter? Did somebody mistake our course for a bulldozer parking lot? I'm looking for grass out there where I can at least see my ball before I hit it. Soggy fairways are no excuse. Heck, there's plenty of water at Myrtle Beach and they mow those fairways twice a day. Weather's no excuse. We pay enough for that fancy equipment you use. I can hardly wait until August when you tell me the weather's too dry."

"Okay, where are those little plastic balls I saw on the flagsticks when I was playing at Jeckyl's Island? You know the ones. They tell you just where the pin is placed. I come home and there's no way I can tell whether I have a three-iron or a two-wood to the green. I know I fought that dues increase to take care of things like that, but times are tough. I got only five weeks of golf in the South this year. But I suppose you only get what you pay for."

How true. Only thing is, at the beginning of another New England golfing season, the superintendent pays and pays and pays for certain things over which he has no control.

But this is the griping season and he's learned to control himself. Have heart, though, guys. Come July and Florida will be burned to a crisp. New England golf courses? They'll have a spit and shine to them that the natives will be raving about and those words of spring they uttered will have taken the normal direction - in one ear and out the other.

Gerry Finn

DIVOT DRIFT Members of the association should support the Francis Ouimet Scholarship Fund as a group. Buy a Ouimet bag tag for \$15. Contact Brian Cowan Golf chairman Steve Murphy should be congratulated on getting handicap cards for all members. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time that we have had legitimate handicaps. Thanks also go to Dick Crosby and Dick Haskell of the MGA Speaking of the Murph, at the May meeting he played with his younger brother Jack (Pine Brook foreman). He told everyone that Jack was the spittin image of himself when he had hair (many years ago) Finally, our thanks to Joe Troll for his fine presentation at the meeting.

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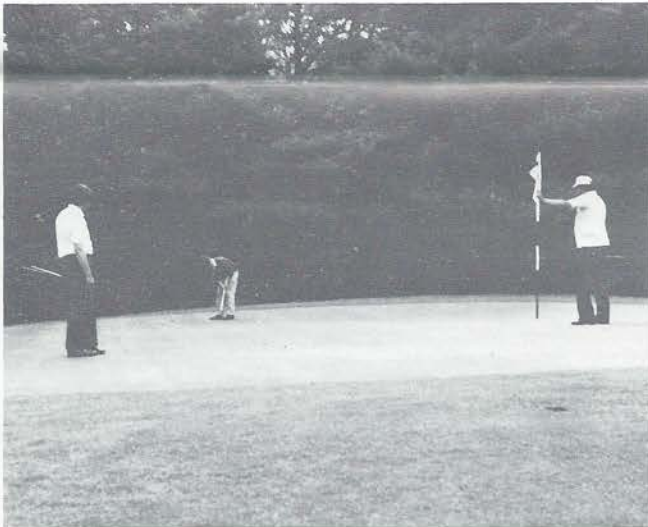
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May Meeting at Pine Brook

We had a large turnout for the educational program and golf. The tournament format was a blind draw team of four, full handicap. The winners were:

Larry Bunn	2nd place: Dave Adamonis
Art Washburn	Jim Bean
Dave Loker	Doug Johnson
Rick Arzillo	Bob Brown

Our Thanks to the Staff at Pine Brook C.C. For hosting our May meeting.



Bob Connolly of Winchester CC putting, with John Streeter of Alpine CC & Mike Hermanson of Gardner looking on.



Tee time: Getting set to tee off: (L-R) Tony Caranci, Norm Mucciarone, Tom Schofield, Paul Miller.



The Winners: Dave Loker, Rick Arzillo, Larry Bunn, Arthur Washburn.

9th Annual U Mass Turf Field Day

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

9:30-10:00 a.m.	Registration
10:00-10:15	Welcome - Dr. Allen V. Barker, Head Department of Plant and Soil Sciences
10:15-12:00	Field Tour of Turfgrass Research Plots
12:00-1:30 p.m.	Box Luncheon on Mt. Sugarloaf
1:30-3:00	Guest Speaker - Mr. James Snow, Director - Northeastern Region, USGA Green Section

Subjects

Growth regulator Sustar 2S
New herbicides for crabgrass control
Plant growth regulators
Results of 1982 insect field trial
Low nitrogen perennial ryegrass evaluation
Low nitrogen Kentucky bluegrass variety evaluation
N:K effects on quality, growth and stress tolerance of perennial ryegrass
Fairway grass management and succession
Helminthosporium control trial
Wet and dry fertilizers for lawn turf
Poa annua control studies
Fairway iron studies on Kentucky bluegrass
Iron studies on bentgrass
Growth regulator (carbohydrate and nitrogen) study

Speakers

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P. Bhowmik
P. Bhowmik
P. Vittum
J. Troll
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