I used to be that once the season was over, be it golf, baseball, football, soccer or any other sport, the grounds manager could begin to take it easy, take a little time off to relax and contemplate the ensuing season. I said it used to be, but that doesn't seem to be the case now.

A combination of milder weather and larger numbers of golf playing aficionados seems to have extended the golf playing season. With more tournaments on the calendar, both professional and amateur, golf courses are getting more play. Large galleries that tramp all over the course watching the tournaments cause soil compaction as well as wear and tear.

This places a tremendous burden on the golf course superintendent and his crew. In years gone by, with less play, smaller galleries and shorter seasons, the superintendent had more time to get his course back in shape. Nature could take its course.

For the sports turf manager, in the past he too would have the time to put his playing fields back in shape once the season was over. But times have changed and we must also change with the times.

To be sure the professional must have a good working knowledge of the turf. The experience he has gained coming up through the ranks will stand him in good stead, but today's manager has to be so much more knowledgeable than his predecessors.

Sports is big business and as such sports turf managers are trying to maximize income revenue. It is not unusual for a sports stadium to have football and baseball games in the same week. It is not unusual for these same stadiums to fill in blank dates with rock concerts, motocross, and even religious services, such as the one Dodger Stadium put on when the Pope visited the United States.

Many stadiums are owned by cities or municipalities. Managers of the stadiums are pressured to generate more revenue and they book dates whenever they can. The pressure is on the sports turf manager. He has to make sure that once the field is used for, let's say a rock concert, and there is a ballgame the following week, that the field is playable.

There is no question that with more frequent use, the fields and the golf courses have shorter time in which to rejuvenate. It is no wonder that these professionals need all the help industry can provide.

And provide they do. Today's newer turfgrasses, chemicals and tools all help the professional to do a better job in a timely manner. I would say the turf manager today has a herculean task.

In days gone by the manager would have complained about the task at hand and how impossible it was to accomplish what management wanted done and still keep the grounds in good shape.

Today's manager realizes that in addition to having to be a professional in good turf management practices he must also begin to think as a businessman. He has to realize that the revenue derived is what drives his management. Management doesn't care how he gets the job done as long as it is done. It is no wonder that budgets for operating these areas have increased.

As for the turf manager of the future, he will not only have to be astute in good turf practices, he will have to possess good business skills as well. No longer will it be uncommon to completely resod a playing field on an annual basis, or reseed frequently. The use of more chemicals to maintain the fields, or new types of equipment to aerate and cut the turf will all come into play to help the manager do a better job. But in the end, the buck stops with the turf manager. It is his knowledge combined with his business skills that will propel him to the top of his profession and place more demands for his services.