

the heck does this have to do with golf and my answer is not a darn thing. Although as I just wrote that line I remembered that when I was 12 years old, my uncle gave me my first golf lesson in the backyard of my grandparents' UFO landing site.

And what happened to my pal "Snooze?" Sometimes when Susi and I visit our friend Jim "Cornfed" Kusters, a Master PGA Professional who lives on Lake Marion in Haines City, I will get up at night and go look into the darkness of the lake and on more than one occasion I could have sworn I saw Snooze zip by in his tri-powered Scarab wearing a yellow Speedo waving to me and remembering the good times back in the 50's.

## Maintenance Motto: Get It Done



**GREEN  
SIDE  
UP**

**BY  
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I read recently that Ben Curtis, winner of the 2006 Booz Allen Classic, paid tribute to the golf course maintenance crew after the tournament was extended two days by weather and finished on an unprecedented Tuesday morning. Curtis said, "They did a wonderful job of getting the course ready. They worked harder than we did getting this tournament done." That scenario reminded me of our maintenance marathons at Disney back in the "good old days" when we hosted the Oldsmobile Scramble and the Disney Classic back to back.

When you consider all the logistics and preparations needed to pull off one PGA Tour event, just imagine doubling that stress and working split-shift

schedules two weeks in a row and trying to have prime tournament conditions three days after the first event wraps up on Monday morning.

All the landing areas are already inundated with divots from one pro and four amateurs hitting shots. What was the tournament committee brain trust thinking besides the convenience of having Tour players on hand for the next week's event?

Don't get me wrong. It was an exciting time and adrenaline kept us going, but it was absolutely no fun during some Octobers when we would get those tropical systems late in hurricane season. It would often get too wet to mow fairways and bunker-bailing was a new routine. Lift, clean and place was the rule of the day. Besides the rash of divots from the previous Scramble week, player and caddy footprints were just as bad in the sodden turf.

It was a welcome relief when the final putt was holed and the tournament was over for another year. And in those rainy years, tearing down the tournament trappings meant more weeks of course damage and repairs. When things returned to normal, there always seemed to be an emotional letdown after being all keyed up and under the gun to perform. We always were acknowledged for our hard work publicly during the trophy presentations, but I wonder how many people really understood the level of effort that was expended.

It is easy for golf fans to focus on the heroic efforts at TV golf events, especially the majors, when maintenance crews and teams of volunteers put the pieces together day after day while Mother Nature tries her best to disrupt the proceedings. Of course at these events big money and livelihoods are involved with TV schedules, sponsorships and tournament purses. The pressure to be open on any given day at your local course may not seem as critical, but on some level it is all important. Lose a weekend day or a special event and that's revenue not coming in. It all adds up.

Blessed are those with well-drained golf courses either with sandy soil or

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good drainage systems. Blessed are those with USGA-spec greens and not "push-up" greens. Blessed are those with wall-to-wall cart paths. Blessed are those courses with members or customers who can read and obey traffic control directions the day of or after a torrential rainstorm. Blessed are those with budgets big enough to have several lightweight fairway mowers and the staff to man them.

Managing your golf game or a golf course isn't rocket science, or is it? When you consider launch angle, trajectory, ball speed, rotation, coefficient of rebound, and torque, perhaps golfers should carry slide rules or calculators in their golf bags. And when maintenance folks must deal with bedknife relief angle, soil pH, bunker sand size and shape, soil porosity, hydrology and meteorology, perhaps the club should make sure the superintendent has a computer with a link to the Internet and a budget line item that will let this valuable agronomist-engineer-manager continue his or her education beyond watering, fertilizing and mowing.

Superintendents aren't clones. Some work harder than others. Some work smarter than others. But they and their crews all shed blood, sweat and tears at times to take care of the golf course.

To ignore that effort is a shame. To not even be aware of the effort is a travesty. To hear someone praise that effort is sublime.

After all, getting it done is what we are all about.