The Role of the Second Assistant

By Joel Jackson, CGCS

Perhaps the title of this issue’s Hands On topic may have seemed a bit limiting since many courses don’t have second Assistants and, in many instances, may not even have one assistant. But every course has a number-one or number-two “go-to” guy or gal whom the superintendent turns to run the show when he or she is away on a business trip or a much-needed vacation.

Sometimes it’s someone to be in charge while the superintendent is in a club meeting, or someone to lead a small project crew or to be the follow-up person during the morning preparations and set up of the golf course.

When there are first and second assistants, they often serve double-duty as crew leaders and supervisors in addition to performing pest-control and irrigation-technician duties. In less common cases, some equipment managers serve as “assistants” to oversee the crew when the superintendent is gone.

During my days at Walt Disney World, we didn’t have anyone with the title of assistant superintendent, but we did have a position called a “lead greenskeeper.” Over time, besides leading several crew members in the usual multi-person activities like routine bunker- or cart-path-edging assignments or perhaps a seasonal greens renovation or sod project, they also began making out daily schedules for the routine jobs.

The pest control and irrigation technician’s work was coordinated and assigned by the superintendents directly. You often hear people say that the crew is the most important asset of the maintenance department, and it’s true. It doesn’t matter how big the budget or elaborate the facility. You can build the biggest and best golf course in the world, but it takes people to make it work. A few of your fellow superintendents chipped in to share the duties and responsibilities of their second assistants.

**John’s Island Club**

John’s Island Club has only one second assistant superintendent on our three courses and that individual is stationed at our West Course. The need arose when our practice facilities were expanded and staffing levels were raised.

The second assistant is in charge of the practice areas. We have a four-acre short-game facility that consists of three greens and eight bunkers, a driving range with a video building and two practice greens. The short-game greens, bunkers, fairway, roughs and divots must all be ready for openers.

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...ing before the golfers arrive. The driving range must be mowed and the bunkers must be raked. The job needs the same detail as we put on the golf course, since many players just go to the West course to use the practice facilities and we must have the employees to respond to the needs.

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**Grey Oaks GC**

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