Scientists continue seeking the elusive: Perfection

By Bob Spiwak

It was an innocent beginning. In the index of Geoffrey Cornish’s book "The Golf Course" I sought the name of the architect of Indian Oaks in Florida, Palms (California), and other regional courses prefixed “Indian.” With half the year past, I thought it was the time to seek some new courses. The index of the book "The Golf Course" I sought was “in,” except for the keepers of the grass. As my first greenkeeper, God put Adam in the garden to work it and take care of it. For thousands of years afterward, the natural look was “in,” except for ballfields, croquet lawns and the like — and golf courses. Yet now, especially in the last decade, the golf industry has been seeking the elusive: Perfection.

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Architects Society does have standards, but not as rigorous as others

To the editor

In the May issue of Golf Course News, I am quoted as saying: "professional standards are neither required by the industry nor offered by some individuals and companies."

This statement does not properly reflect what I said to Frances Trimble, the author, but I can easily see how my comments might have been taken out of context in an honest effort to shorten the article.

It is my understanding (and I don't know the facts, since I resigned many years ago) that the American Society of Golf Course Architects does require a prospective member to attend three annual meetings, take some sort of test (which might or might not be graded), and work under a member of the society for a certain number of years before being admitted.

I'm not sure that "being admitted" is the same thing as "being qualified to practice." But there are some sort of standards for the industry. So I do not want to appear to do the industry a disservice.

My comments during the interview were that the industry does not require the same rigorous educational standards required of engineers (and I happen to be one), architects, doctors or lawyers before the individual can claim he is a professional in the field.

Some individuals represent themselves as professionals without even the ASGCA requirements, and some do not offer the client sufficient plans and specifications to obtain reasonable bids. In my opinion, the industry - from a professional and ethical standpoint - is lamentable and needs to be put on a sounder, more acceptable basis.

Those calling themselves "golf course architects" should have at least three years of college engineering or three years of landscape architecture, plus a year of civil engineering, plus at least one year of agronomy specializing in grasses and turf. It helps to be able to shoot in the 70s, but it is not critical if one doesn't.

I hope this clarifies my position.

Sincerely,

Joseph S. Finger, P. E.

Kerrville, Texas

Résumé

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