Greetings from new editor

It’s a privilege to introduce myself as the new editor of Golf Course News. I wish I could shake hands with each of you. Hopefully we’ll have a chance to get acquainted in person before too long.

My interest in golf dates back to age 13, when I spent the first of several summers as a caddy at Whitford Country Club, in Exton, Pa. I knew practically nothing about the game when I started there, and was always amused when a member asked my advice about which club to hit. I recall being sent off to the clubrooms with no more comprehension than a shrimp examining a nuclear submarine. The caddies were permitted to golf on Mondays, and the more I played, the harder I was bitten by the “golf bug.” Today I love the game. I’ve never agreed with Mark Twain’s famous observation that golf is “a good walk spoiled.” The way I see it, golf is a good walk enhanced.

My interest in journalism dates back to high school, when I became a sportswriter for the school paper. Later, as a student at Penn State University, I continued covering sports for the campus newspaper, The Daily Collegian. Penn State has two 18-hole courses on campus, the Blue and the White, and it was on those courses that my level of play advanced from “wild hack” to “moderate hack.”

From college I moved on to military service. The Army, in its wisdom, saw fit to assign me to Heidelberg, Germany — a splendid duty station that had its own fine American golf course, built after World War II by the occupying forces. The Heidelberg Golf & Sports Club became a favorite haunt for those of us who liked to hit “the dimpled ball,” as my commanding officer called it.

Returning to civilian life, I moved to Washington, DC, and took my first paid job as a journalist, covering Congress, the White House, and other government agencies for a chain of weekly newspapers. For another five or so years or so I served as a kind of foreign correspondent, reporting magazine articles about everything from wars in Central America to fishing in Alaska to the bar scene in Bangkok. In 1986 I switched to Inc. magazine, a national monthly that focuses on entrepreneurship and business management. As Washington bureau chief and columnist, I explored the impact of politics and policy on various sectors of the business world. Finally, in 1991, I moved my family from Washington to Maine in search of a higher quality of life — and less crowded golf courses.

My goal as editor — and our goal as a staff — is to provide you not only with news about the golf industry, but also some interpretation of what that news means to you. What’s the story behind the story? We hope to inform, entertain, and analyze, all with the fundamental goal of helping you run your business more effectively.

I’m delighted to be on the team at Golf Course News. Please don’t hesitate to call with your ideas, your concerns, or your questions. I look forward to meeting all of you — and playing golf with many of you.

The Masters no place to show your temper, Mr. Duval

MARKET DRAYTON, England — Another Masters, another season is upon us, another £10 handed over to William Hills bookmakers with zero return — thanks to Jim Furyk. If you need to look for a showcase event for golf, then the Masters is ready to rock and roll. Furyk, a gaggle of golfers of the lowest order, loves to watch the Masters. There really is something, some indescribable lure that captures the imagination. Non-golfers watch the Masters, more so than any other golfing event I would venture.

Such a shame, therefore, that David Duval should display such a fit of pique on the last hole that even the aforementioned "SWMO To Who Must Be Obeyed", made the point: "Ouch! The groundsman will be really cross won’t he?" This in response to Duval’s impromptu gardening session after landing in a divot and making a codes of his approach shot, thus leaving Singh with three putts for it.

Alright, alright, I cannot claim any moral high ground here. I too have been mad at myself by burying my club into the ground, and the hosel following a misjudged pitch shot (an underclub I like to call them), but that is very different. Despite my protestations that I have merely aided the greenkeeper with his aeration program, the result is always the same — my playing partners rightly judge that I am an arse who ought to know better and, furthermore, the only real victim is myself as my anger over takes rationality. But Duval?

Sure he is playing for a major, for zillions of dollars, at a standard that is incomprehensible. But he shouldn’t have attacked the turf in such a churlish way. So he was in a divot? Tough. Welcome to real conditions. If he is as good as his earnings indicate, then a mere divot should do one of two things; give an opportunity to show how good he is or give an opportunity to show that a sportsman can take the rough with the smooth. Does he immediately write a check to the greenkeeper when superlative maintenance gives him a perfect lie that perhaps he didn’t deserve? I think not.

I can’t help myself here. I know that I sound like a retired Major-General in full pomposity. But where is the man’s respect? If a greenkeeper offered Duval advice about his alignment during the middle of a tournament, a criticism for example, would Duval thank him and reassure him that his input is helpful? No. Therefore why is it accepted that Duval can show such bad behaviour? A prima donna flouncing to her dressing room until her tutu is altered — an awkward moment. It represents that Duval destroyed represents more than a turf transplant and an awkward moment. It represents a role model giving a bad impression. If the 'hoped for hordes' of junior's take up the game, I rather think that 'throwing the temper tantrum? A prima donna flouncing to her dressing room just because the greenkeeper gave her rough' is not part of their etiquette training. So a mixed message comes from the shaded ice man: "It's OK for you to vandalize the golf course (which doesn't belong to you by the way) as long as the competition is important."