



Pat Jones is president of Flagstick LLC, a consulting firm that provides sales and marketing intelligence to green-industry businesses. He can be reached at psjhawk@cox.net or 440-478-4763.

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Don't try this at home

Everyone has a secret guilty pleasure. For some, it's eating an entire container of Ben & Jerry's ice cream at midnight. For others, it's being obsessed with buying Pez dispensers on eBay. Hey, as long as it doesn't involve inappropriate relationships with farm animals, I'm all for anything that lets you relax and escape from the day-to-day grind.

My secret guilty pleasure is bad TV. Specifically, I admit to being a fan of truly awful shows such as "Jackass" on MTV. The monumentally stupid "Jackass" and various other stupid programs like it involve stupid and dangerous stunts performed by equally stupid people. If you're not familiar with this genre, just imagine the "stars" of the show allowing world-class jai alai players to repeatedly hurl oranges at 90 mph at their buttocks. Enough said.

All of these inane shows have one thing in common. They always run a legal disclaimer at the beginning of each segment imploring that viewers don't try this at home. These warnings, crafted by the slimiest of entertainment lawyers, are somehow supposed to prevent teenagers from attempting the same idiocy in their backyards. Yeah, right. Have you ever met a teenager who would actually read and abide by a legal disclaimer?

Conditioning expectations

Anyway, I have a modest proposal along these lines based on a recent trip I took down to Pinehurst, N.C. I was there on behalf of "Superintendents' VideoMagazine" to interview Paul Jett, CGCS, a very cool cat who's about to host his second U.S. Open at the resort's famed Course No. 2. The interview went great — mainly because Paul is the most media-savvy turfhead in the known universe — but toward the end, he threw us a curveball.

Paul turned the tables and asked us a question: "Will this video be seen by green chairmen or owners or other golfers?" A bit surprised, I said, "Possibly," and asked him why he wanted to know. He replied, "Because I have a message for them." So we kept the cameras rolling to record what he had to say.

His message was pretty simple and extremely forthright. I encourage you

to go back and take another look at the April edition of "Superintendents' VideoMagazine" for his exact wording. This video would be an excellent thing to share with your facility's decision-makers or others who might have unreasonable expectations about conditioning.

Open season

That said, I will, as usual, take a wee bit of literary license and offer my embellished version of what Paul was trying to get through to the millions of morons, er ... I mean customers ... who will watch the Open next month:

- What you see on TV every June, Mr. or Ms. Golfer, is the product of years of planning, preparation and a gazillion dollars of additional maintenance spending. Do not, under any circumstances, equate this with reality.

- Those four days the host course is showcased on TV are like an elaborate David Copperfield illusion. We are levitating elephants and sawing pretty women in half here. We have created the world's largest agronomic magic trick, and you have been duped into thinking that a pachyderm can actually float in mid-air as effortlessly as a child's helium balloon.

- Please temper your expectations and try not to be so adamant that you should be getting a five-course gourmet meal when you're driving through a Burger King at midnight. Unless you've dumped six figures into your club's initiation fee, just relax, shut up and enjoy the game.

- Never, ever listen to anything that a Tour player says about course conditions. These guys live in a traveling Disney World where everything is perfect and they haven't seen a patch of dead grass in a fairway since they were popping pimples in high school. When did these clowns become rock stars demanding that no brown M&M's be allowed in their dressing rooms?

- Ditto that for announcers — particularly Johnny Miller. I find it ironic and terribly amusing that Johnny is now a self-proclaimed expert on putting sur-

faces. Unless I'm mistaken, the reason he "retired" from the Tour is because he couldn't make a *#@%#! putt to save his life!

- Any Tour player or announcer who so much as utters the words "Stimp-meter reading" on television should be required to personally conduct the weekly septic system flush-out of John Daly's Winnebago for the rest of the year.

- Golf is a game. The goal is to complete an obstacle course between point A and point B. Nobody said that what you encounter in between was supposed to be AstroTurf. That's what makes it fun. Quit blaming your lousy swing, bad luck and mental mistakes on the nice people who work so hard to provide you with a beautiful place to enjoy this damned silly pastime.

Ahhh, I feel so much better. Venting is always good for the soul.

Proposal

So, now that I've gotten that out of my system, I'll return to my original point. I modestly propose that — in all fairness — televised golf should adopt the same kind of disclaimer that "Jackass" runs before every episode. Whenever they

start the broadcast or come back from a commercial, NBC, CBS or whoever should briefly air the following message:

We hope you're enjoying the Viagra/

Cialis/Enzyte Sheboygan Classic. Please be warned that there isn't a snowball's chance in hell that you'll ever play on a course that looks like this. As President George Bush (No. 1) used to say, 'Naht gonna happen.' This is a made-for-TV event that in no way represents a typical golf experience (except if you're one of the jerks on the Tour or Bill Gates). Please get a clue, take a reality check, crack open another beer and lay off your local superintendent. In short, don't expect to try this at home.

P.S. — There is no such thing as 'grain' on most well-maintained greens, so just ignore the blithering blond bozo in the broadcast booth. Thanks and enjoy the show. GCN

UNLESS YOU'VE DUMPED SIX FIGURES INTO YOUR CLUB'S INITIATION FEE, JUST RELAX, SHUT UP AND ENJOY THE GAME.