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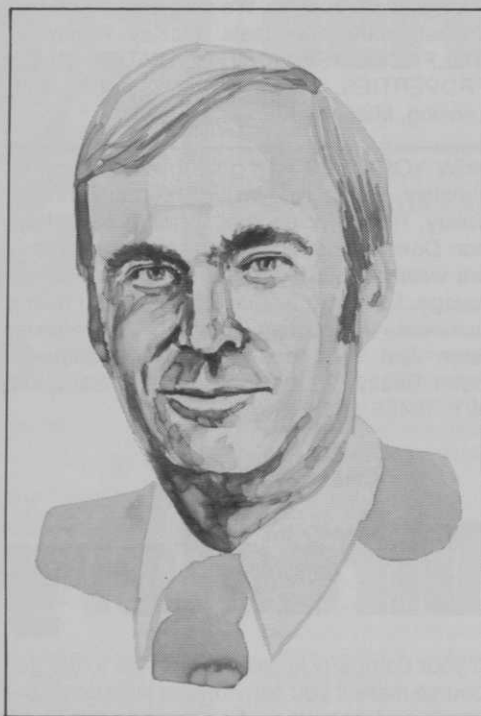
Should Certified Golf Course Superintendents get job preference and better pay?

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Let me start by asking you another question. "Should college turf management graduates receive job preference and better pay than non-high school graduates?" Certainly not in my book. Certificates, degrees, and diplomas are great, but they are no guarantee of a man's ability. In fact, some of the best-maintained golf courses in Virginia are managed by men who didn't even graduate from high school. Now don't get me wrong. I think the GCSAA certification program is an excellent step in the right direction, but I don't want to see highly qualified superintendents discriminated against just because they didn't take or pass the GCSAA certification exam. Being a GCSAA certified superintendent shouldn't be the one ingredient to attaining the highest paying jobs or receiving preferential treatment. Past experience and job performance should certainly come before certification. As a course owner or greens chairman, I would certainly consider those two qualifications before I asked, "Are you certified?"

Now let's talk briefly about the GCSAA certification program. I would like to stress the fact that I have been a GCSAA member for 15 years and a devoted promoter of the GCSAA, but I also believe the present certification program has a weakness or two. It does not guarantee that its graduates have the ability to maintain or administer the functions necessary to run the complex golf courses of today. A college diploma doesn't guarantee the employer he is getting a qualified manager able to handle the day-to-day problems surrounding labor, budgets, automatic irrigation, purchasing, pesticide applications, and equipment maintenance. In fact, I'm not sure those professors hiding behind the "ivy walls" could handle the frontline attack we superintendents experience each day of the year.

Now, I will be the first to admit that the more knowledge one has, the better chance he has at being a success in his profession. Reading *GOLF BUSINESS*, *The Golf Superintendent*, and *Weeds Trees and Turf* will certainly help to educate one. Attending turf management short courses, turf conferences, and seminars also will help. Taking the GCSAA certification exam is one more step in the never-ending educational process but shouldn't be the one single ingredient to acquiring the top paying jobs or receiving job preference. Remember, just because an automobile mechanic has been



certified, that doesn't guarantee he can repair your car.

The GCSAA certification program will remain incomplete until it includes an on-the-job inspection of its candidates' golf courses. This final step will prove whether the man is truly worthy of being called a "Certified Golf Course Superintendent." As it is now, one can buy his certification for a few dollars and some memorizing, or he can be a truly certified superintendent by spending his time on the course managing those day-to-day problems using common sense and logic. After 10 years on any golf course, a superintendent can be considered certified if he still has his job.