The Good, the Bad And the Reality

BY JOEL JACKSON

It might make life easier if some of our golf associations pulled together to track or rate management companies, similar to what the Better Business Bureau does. Then, shady operators or companies that get lots of performance complaints could be identified.

But remember, Superintendents never have guaranteed jobs, no matter who their employers are. I’ve known more superintendents fired by their clubs than by management companies. These dismissals range from personality clashes, club politics, course conditions and poor communications to near-sighted, cost-cutting measures. Trying to figure out superintendent job changes is like choosing between doors No. 1, 2 and 3. You don’t always know the facts.

Management company superintendents commonly note several pros and cons. While they cite loss of autonomy in making decisions as the biggest drawback, they like the secure feeling of belonging to a larger organization.

Mandatory paperwork and meetings may be aggravating to some, but others like the fact that there’s more continuity and written standards than operating under an ever-changing greens committee or an eccentric owner.

Loner and maverick personalities find it hard to merge into team player roles with several layers of management. Others like the fact that they have backup support and built-in resources.

Then there are those superintendents who never got support from their clubs for continuing education and professional associations. Most reputable management companies promote education and participation.

I call it a coin toss. You can badmouth management companies if you want, but don’t paint them all with the same brush.

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