When It’s Time to Get Out of the Box

BY JIM BLACK

Against all forces of box logic, you send the mechanic out to spray greens and have your tee-mowing guy help mow greens instead to keep ahead of the spraying mechanic. Meanwhile, you pull one of your fairway mowing guys to help change cups on the back because you didn’t know about the 16-man shotgun (“Oh, it was only a small group. I didn’t think you needed to know about them.”)

Now the only guy you have left to handle today’s surprise irrigation break is the one you hired yesterday to rake bunkers. “I know it’s hard to shovel mud. Be careful of the wires, I’ll be back in a minute.”

Back to the barn you race to assess the puddle of hydraulic fluid under the rough unit. Wishing your mechanic was actually two people, you grab an adjustable wrench and tighten down on a couple of dripping connections in hopes that you can get some of the north forty cut before lunch and the impending afternoon thunderstorm.

Whew. Now that you have your entire crew out the door, you can go jump on the other fairway unit for a little peace and quiet.

I must say that, among the choices of solutions to the myriad of challenges that greenkeepers face, I’ve never counted filling in blank checks or ordering up a shiny new fleet of turf equipment to be among the most creative. (I will give creative credit, however, to the ability to convince board and committee members to give you the blank check in the first place.)

What is creative is facing a challenge head on using only what you already have to work with. No one does this as well as the greenkeeper and crew at a public course.

The key to opening up that creative vault is to think outside the box.

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