Mother Nature Still Rules in Golf

BY JOEL JACKSON

HURRICANE CHARLEY HIT SUPERINTENDENTS HARD AND PROVED WE OFTEN STILL SERVE AT THE PLEASURE OF THE WEATHER

in Punta Gorda and Port Charlotte were devastated. Clean-up crews were still digging out the Burnt Store Marina & Country Club on Pine Island two weeks after the storm. Trees on the barrier islands were defoliated and tall trees were reduced to huge stumps with only twisted and broken branches remaining. The tidal surge deposited sand, silt and salt on some courses.

There are a couple of stories about the clueless or insensitive folks that showed up for their Saturday morning tee time at 6:20 a.m. the morning after.

Then there was one fellow ranting about how the grounds staff needed to start propping up those downed trees immediately or they would die. During his rant, people held back the superintendent, who wanted to hurt the guy. The golfer was completely oblivious to the fact that some crew members toiling long hours in the hot sun to clean up the course had lost their homes in the storm.

Mother Nature once again displayed her raw power and put asunder things that man had built in the blink of an eye. Humanity's influence on natural systems is often given more importance and/or blame than it deserves. The 1980 Mt. St. Helen's volcanic eruption comes to mind. Its zone of destruction still exists 24 years later for everyone to see, and people had nothing to do with it either.

We should always strive to minimize any possible negative effects on the environment from human enterprise and development. But people must often stand by helplessly to watch, wait and hope that we will survive when nature decides to strike its own mighty blow upon the land. Remember Charley and the other hurricanes, and keep your suffering colleagues in your thoughts.

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