

"Incorporating new ideas and plans is all part of making something better, as long as you know your core strengths and uniqueness."

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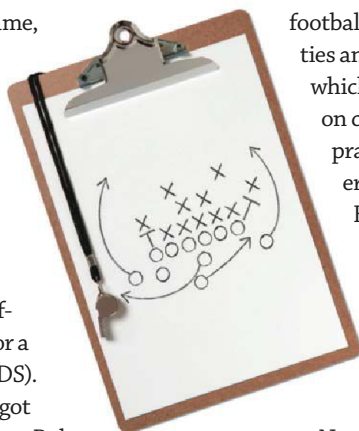
Leadership isn't something you clone

At the beginning of 1969, the University of Michigan hired Bo Schembechler as football coach. Previous to his hiring, Michigan was at best a mediocre team through the 1960s. Attendance at the football games averaged between 30,000 and 60,000 in a stadium that seated over 100,000 fans.

Schembechler came to the university during a time of unrest and radicalism for students. In this environment it was not uncommon for students to go to a home football game, at least those who went, then head to central campus to protest the Vietnam War. Around the same time of Schembechler's arrival, a group of student radicals formed the Weathermen, an offshoot to the Students for a Democratic America (SDS). The Weathermen, who got their name from a line in a Bob Dylan song, "You don't need a weatherman to tell you which way the wind is blowing," bombed government buildings and banks in protest.

During spring football in 1969,

Schembechler came into the radical student and university setting and changed the culture of the football team. He required the football players to wear coats, ties and letter jackets, for which they faced ridicule on campus. During spring practices, one to two players were quitting daily. However Schembechler said, "Those who stay will be champions." Whatever he did, he transformed an average team into one that beat the



No. 1 ranked Ohio State University in the fall of 1969.

I bring this story up, because years later some of his assistant coaches got head coaching jobs at other university football programs. One university hired an assistant with the intention of

getting a clone of Schembechler. This coach failed miserably. Whatever traits made Schembechler a leader were not easily copied.

Acting like someone does not make a leader or a successful person. If you are trying to be someone you are not, people will see you as a fake. We have all seen that in a new superintendent who acts like someone he is not. The staff and crew see right through the charade.

I know you can learn to be a better leader by working for, or observing others you admire through leadership classes, conferences and by reading. A key is recognizing who you are, your strengths and weaknesses, then incorporating what you admire and learn into your "self."

My comments are not earthshaking and serve only as a reminder, but we can use these same ideas to make for a better golf course and golf course operation. A golf course is designed in a location that has unique characteristics, and might be referred to with a, "This is how golf was meant to be played" only to be copied somewhere else and fail.

Why? Because each site has a unique quality to itself, perhaps land form, location or market. Whether it is a golf course or a golf course management program, incorporating new ideas and plans is all part of making something better, as long as you know your core strengths and uniqueness.

Bo Schembechler was a leader of men. He is in the company of other leaders like Dwight D. Eisenhower, Martin Luther King, Jr., Ronald Reagan, Nelson Mandela and John F. Kennedy to name a few. Each shared similar qualities, but each was unique.

What is it that makes you unique and how can you build on that to become a better leader or a leading golf course facility?

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