



In Bounds

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"If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you always got," quoted a man I greatly respect. It is interesting how this simple 17-word sentence can provoke an introspective search for answers to recurring problems.

Two issues I have had in recent years are sinusitis and spring damage to my greens. Directly related you ask? No not at all, but by applying the "If you always do..." concept I was better able to successfully address my dilemmas and in the process open my mind to new ideas, and the opportunities from embracing a professional peer group for answers and suggestions.

Sinusitis can be a real pain. What I once attributed to a bad hangover I can now say is really an infection in my upper respiratory system that at times feels as though someone smacked me between the eyes with a baseball bat. The symptoms

typically occurred at least three times per month and caused me to be very irritable, unfocused and fatigued. None of which was pleasant for me,

my associates and especially my family.

Over the counter drugs touted for the relief of sinusitis did cut the edge off of my pounding headache, but the thought of taking drugs regularly made me feel uncomfortable. Much discussion with my dear wife led me to try an old ancient remedy, the Neti, also called the Jananeti, Pot.

This device, shaped like a small teapot, is filled with warm salt water and used to irrigate the nasal passageways. In one nostril and out the other! YUCK! Or so it sounds, but talk about instant satisfaction. After my first treatment I could feel an immediate loosening of something, only God knows what, all the way up to my eardrums. Repeated treatments only improved my head health. And after several weeks of cleansing my sinuses I have eliminated the use of over the counter drugs, improved my breathing and have only had one short-lived headache.

By opening up my mind and doing something untested by me, yet tried and true by others, I was able to broaden my horizons and improve my well-being. In a different yet similar vein of thought I tried something else new this spring.

Actually the recovery process wasn't terribly novel, but my process of achieving the desired end took a twist. For the past several years I had addressed my limited putting surface damage with gardeners, seed, top dressing and maybe the application of a remnant cover but only after green up and

always with an attitude that with time will come recovery. I never contacted anyone and just went with what had worked in the past. But 2005 held a surprise of damage beyond anything I had ever experienced or had witnessed before.

For the first time in my career I really opened up my attitude toward asking for help. Sure I have my close peer group whom I can bounce ideas off of, but the green restoration program my staff and I were embarking upon was of huge proportions. I needed help. Looking outside the box I sought professional guidance from my peers who had at one time been in a similar position.

History indicated that my best resources would be those injured last year by the use of non-insulated and water impervious plastic covers. It is suspected that water condensation underneath the plastic covers had actually created a crown hydration situation not unlike what my course had experienced this past February. I also spoke with those who had suffered minor winter damage in recent years and had some sage advice to offer.

Again, I needed help. And for once wasn't going to do what I had always done because the magnitude of the end results were critical. I needed experts, so I picked up the phone and gave them a call.

Michael Brower, Superintendent at Minnesota Valley Country Club, told me to get started sooner rather than later. "Don't wait; get on the program right away. Keep play limited until your plants are mature. And don't be in a hurry to get onto the new surfaces."

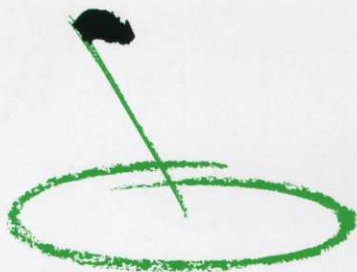
Another experienced Superintendent, Dale Caldwell, CGCS, from Minneapolis Golf Club, indicated not to be shy with the seed, fire up the irrigation early and keep the establishing turf wet, wet, wet. Do not allow it to dry out.

Rolling Green's Superintendent Drew Larsen expressed thankfulness for the spring recovery green covers he was loaned from other local Supers last year. "Get 'em down (the covers) as soon as possible, keep the greens covered and don't be in a hurry to open them for play," were his words of wisdom.

And perhaps the best information was gleaned from Jeff Johnson, Superintendent at The Minikahda Club, regarding green restoration. Jeff shared the importance of monitoring the temperatures beneath the recovery covers as the warmth can soar under the blanket this time of year, thus damaging the tender

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plants and increasing the disease pressure. He also warned me of being too free with the top dressing sand. And finally, like the others, he suggested that I wait as long as possible before opening them to play and once I do, keep the turf long and healthy, gradually bringing the height of cut down and speed up.

Alone, none of these suggestions was earth shattering and taken in total they reflect basic common agronomic sense. However, as a turf professional facing a daunting task, I needed and relished the suggestions of peers who had experienced what I was about to undertake. The empathy, support and encouragement afforded me the energy I needed to sell my final plan to my BOD and implement the program in a timely basis.

By not doing what I had always done and getting what I had always got, I achieved some impressive results. Utilizing the support system inherent within our professional organization I did not go it alone. Thanks guys for your insights. I really appreciated them.

So, today the sun is shining, my grass is growing well and I can finally smell the lilacs, courtesy of my new Neti Pot. I am comforted knowing there are resources available at my fingertips when I need them. All I have to do is take a different approach to a standard procedure and open myself to a world of diverse, better possibilities.

Audubon International Update

As a part of Audubon International's ongoing Golf and Environment efforts -- from our Fifty in Five goal to improved service and environmental education throughout the industry -- we offer an update on our current activities.

Audubon International continues to see upward movement in ACSF and Signature Program membership numbers, with growth in both areas. Perhaps more importantly, a significant number of members are working towards certification. Over half of all current golf members have begun the certification process and almost 25% have been designated as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.

MGCSA support will help us reach our ambitious "Fifty in Five" goal of having 50% of all golf courses in the United States enrolled and active in our environmental programs by the end of 2007.

Audubon International works with golf courses of all sizes, expectations, and budgets. From a nine-hole course located on a mere 4 acres to the expansive courses, we are helping courses to reduce risk, save money, protect water quality, conserve water and enhance wildlife habitat.

Our ongoing collaboration with GCSAA and the Environmental Institute for Golf (EIFG) continues, with President & CEO, Ron Dodson, serving on the Environmental Programs committee and Program Manager Joellen Zeh, serving on the Wildlife and Habitat Management Task Group of the EIFG.

(Editor's Note: You can reach Audubon International at 518/767-9051).

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