



Insight **One Superintendent's Perspective**

By Kyle Nygaard
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I have been involved in the golf industry since 1987. I began working at Minnewaska Golf Club in Glenwood, Minnesota throughout high school and college. After graduating from NDSU in 1994 I moved to Naples, Florida in which I began working at Vineyards Country Club, then went on to work at Royal Wood Golf & Country Club and now am currently at Eagle Lakes Golf Club.

Why and how did I enter the turf management industry:

My sister worked at the Minnewaska GC Pro shop in Minnesota and I decided I wanted to do something with myself other than work on my father's dairy farm, so I thought that I would get a part-time job at the course. After a couple of months I decided I really liked it. The first two Summers all I did was tee service and push mow around all the trees; somehow I thought that was a pretty cool job.

Who was my professional mentor and why?

I have had two. I would first have to say Dennis Schoenfeldt from Minnewaska Golf Club due to the fact that he was the one who got me started. His love of agronomy and his hard work and dedication to the golf course is what really inspired me. He took the time to show me how to perform all the duties on the course and that is when I knew that this was something that I wanted to pursue as a life-long goal. Another mentor was Peter R. Metcalf, CGCS. After college and living in Naples on my own, he was really good to me. He reinforced to me how important work ethic, dedication, course conditioning and commitment were to having a successful golf course.

High Point

The biggest high in my career would have to be getting my first head superintendent position at Royal Wood Golf and Country Club in 1999 and then of course becoming certified in 2005.

Low Point

The lowest point would have to be witnessing club politics first hand when my contract was not renewed for 2007 after having worked at Royal Wood for nine years.

Are your greatest challenges political, agronomic or managerial?

My current position is definitely an agronomic challenge. We deal with some horrible water quality issues and our soils are a constant challenge as well. During construction at Eagle Lakes a lot of short cuts were made and now we are trying to rectify them. At Royal Wood, it was political. Having 800 members was difficult because you are dealing with all types of personalities and you cannot win.

What is the most difficult disease to manage on your course and how do you?

Bermudagrass is pretty bullet proof if you have solid cultural practices and maintain a preventive fungicide program. However, in hurricane season with the heavy amounts of rainfall, days of cloudy weather and high temperatures and humidity, you have to be on a top of things. Mainly raise HOC, and spoon feed N and keep the K high.

Is it hard to find good help in your area of the state?

In Naples, 90% of our labor force is Hispanic. They have excellent work ethic; however, they will leave for a dime more per hour and love to take extended trips to Mexico, which can be frustrating at times. Also, they lack the knowledge of the game which makes training more important.

Do you have a dog on your crew?

No, gators would get them!!!!

Where will our industry be in 10 years?

Right now clubs are looking for ways

to cut budgets and save money. I see clubs trying to cut one salary and look towards the superintendent to wear the GM hat, it is us or the head pro. I also can see mowers being run by GPS or computers without a operator, saving on labor.

Technology will continue to press forward and we need to embrace it rather than fight it. And members will continue to want it all.

Where do I plan to be in 10 years?

Working and raising my family in Minnesota.

What is my perspective of our state association and what would you change?

Having lived in Naples since 1994, I obviously have not been able to participate in all the functions that our association puts forth. Once I get back to Minnesota I look forward to becoming more involved. I know that a lot of people make the effort to volunteer and these individuals should be applauded for their efforts.

In the state of Florida, we have 12 local chapters and then our state association. I have always wondered if that would work in Minnesota, getting more involvement throughout the state, maybe that has been discussed?

Name your foursome...

Ben Crenshaw, Davis Love III and Phil Mickelson. I have always admired the way these three conduct themselves on and off the course. All three have great family values, excellent morals and ethics and are good role models. To listen to the stories that they can tell and gain some wisdom would be priceless.

Extra Tidbit

If anyone gets down to the Naples area please look me up!