

## Putting an End to Weekend Scheduling Woes

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If you're tired of cajoling crew members to come in for their weekend tour of duty, you might want to give some thought to Superintendent Mike Reeb's labor-scheduling program. Not your run-or-the-mill approach to scheduling, the program's not only put an end to weekend work woes, it's allowed Mike to virtually eliminate all overtime—two side benefits to a program Mike says he developed two years ago expressly to create more reasonable and attractive work hours for his staff.

Though he's the first to admit his approach may not be appropriate for *every* golf course maintenance operation, Mike claims it's

been well received—by both his crew and Green Committee—at the Country Club of New Canaan in New Canaan, Conn. Here are the ins and outs of how it works:

### Program Basics

The New Canaan maintenance department operates seven days a week, year-round. Mike, his assistant, and each of his crew members—eight full-time and four seasonal—work five days a week, with one day off during the week and one day off during the weekend.

Toward the end of each month, Mike and his assistant, John Howe, draw up a schedule for the next 30 days, taking into account employees' advance

requests for specific days off or vacation time. (Employees may take vacations any time of the year, providing they don't interfere with prepwork for a special event.)

This advance planning process helps guarantee that the department is never shorthanded and can complete its work without overtime—something traditional workweeks rarely permit. Mike says cutting overtime has freed up enough funds to hire an additional full-time person.

Unless otherwise requested, employees' days off are randomly distributed and vary from week to week. Though it's possible for employees to have two consecu-

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tive days off (e.g. Sunday and Monday), it's more the exception than the rule.

Once completed, the schedule is posted above the time clock, and everyone is responsible for adhering to it without reminders.

#### **Making the Program Work**

First, it's critical that you gain complete support from your green committee and general membership. Though you would naturally avoid some of the more disruptive maintenance procedures during the weekends, members must be willing to see some maintenance activity throughout the day on Saturday and Sunday. After all, with this program, everyday is a full workday.

Second, hash out the program details with crew members before implementation. Invite their input—their comments, suggestions, and concerns. If they feel a

part of the decision process, they're more apt to buy into the program. One concern Mike had to address at New Canaan was the loss of overtime wages. Mike met the employees halfway by offering full-time workers a pay increase, or differential, to partially compensate for the discontinued overtime wages.

Third, cross-train your employees so everyone is capable of performing a variety of maintenance tasks. The advantage: you'll be able to complete any job, no matter who has the day off. New Canaan's maintenance crew, for instance, now has nine employees with an operators Pesticide License, so the department's never caught without a trained pesticide applicator when a disease makes a surprise appearance.

Last but not least, remain flexible. Other issues may arise

after the program has been in place for a while. If you're flexible, you can accommodate employees' individual concerns without jeopardizing other crew members' morale or satisfaction with the program.

#### **Program Pluses**

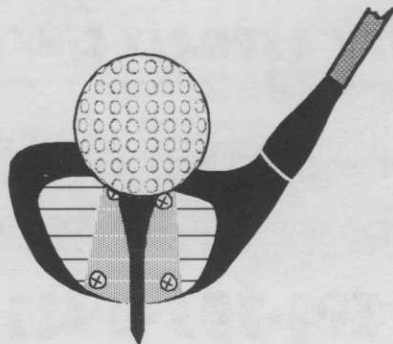
The greatest advantage of this approach is flexibility—from both a management and maintenance perspective. Cross-trained employees are able to rotate their duties, which not only keeps their work interesting, but also allows them to swap days off with each other in a pinch.

On the maintenance end, Mike says they've improved the department's attention to detail by scheduling some of the smaller, often overlooked jobs for the

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**Scheduling**

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weekend. One improvement he's noted: a neater, more organized maintenance area. On the course, they've been able to regularly tend to such hard-to-get-to tasks as weeding flower beds and edging walkways.

But probably more significant in Mike's mind is that the seven-day work week has enabled the maintenance operation to respond more quickly—and easily—to the unexpected. Whether it's an equipment breakdown, a change in weather, or the sudden rescheduling of a tournament, someone's always on hand to take immediate action. The end result: improved member satisfaction.

If you'd like more information about Mike's labor scheduling program, feel free to contact him at 203-966-2145.

**In Memory of John S. Connolly**

John S. Connolly died May 5, 1994, in Delray Beach, Fl. at 85.

John founded the turf equipment firm, J. S. Connolly, in 1936, having worked four years as Greens Superintendent at Army Navy CC in Arlington, Va. He sold the equipment firm in 1946 to his brother-in-law, George Cornell.

John was a long-time member of the Mid-Atlantic Superintendents' Association and was among the longest term members of the National Association.

He built and owned the Fairfax Country Club in Fairfax, Va. in 1940 and 1945. He later sold the Club to a New York firm which sold it in turn to the Army Navy Country Club.

John had a fine golfing

career—having won, among other titles, the GCSAA Championship, the Virginia State Senior's Championship, and the Burning Tree Club Championship.

He served as President of the American Senior's Golf Association and was later elected a distinguished senior of that organization. He also served as President of the Washington Golf and Country Club in Arlington, Va.

John is survived by his wife, Adelaide, and a son, John S. Connolly, Jr. Also surviving are four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

There will be a family memorial service in Chautauqua, New York during the summer.

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