

Labor Problems!!!

by Bob Ford, CGCS Los Altos Country Club

How many golf courses have the inconvenience of having to deal with unions and the problems they create for management? Several, I am sure. If you have a union shop or think some union is trying to infiltrate your organization, find out why these employees feel a union can better serve them as opposed to you and your club. Nine times out of ten the clubs are not upgrading the current benefits or working conditions. Everyone likes a fair shake so the unions prey on these situations, telling the employees what great benefits they can have by joining a union. Most employees don't realize negotiations begin with a blank piece of paper. They can get even less than they have now.

So far I am three for three getting rid of the unions, but I had professional help. Timing is critical for submitting the proper paper work, plus knowing the do's and don'ts of the law, can make the difference.

My first union encounter was because of the above mentioned conditions; poor pay and benefits. The employees signed union cards and an election was held, but not before much inconvenience of meetings, additional paper work and court appearances. It was a close vote but the club won.

The next two instances were with existing union shops. When the contracts were due for renewal or bargaining, the decertification process started. More paper work, meetings, inconvenience, employee discontent, etc. Even after a favorable vote for management and the club, the process is not over. Grievances or unfair labor practices can be filed to prolong the outcome. My last decertification attempt lasted almost a year.

My best advice to anyone attempting to deal with unions in any way, is to contract some professional help that break unions as a business. The initial cost could be high but your problems are minimal.

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