



Participating in the John Deere Classic

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I had a great experience this summer. I was able to participate in the John Deere Classic with my employer. The golf tournament, sponsored by Deere, was held near their headquarters in Moline, IL. I simply filled out an on-line form and was lucky enough to have my name drawn in their Superintendent/Employer Recognition Program. That meant two spots in the John Deere Superintendent Pro-Am. The event was held at the TPC at Deere Run during the week of the PGA Tour's John Deere Classic.

Winning the drawing meant I had to choose a partner. After some major whining and arm-twisting, I invited Ray Davies, CGCS to join me as my employer (*no, my job was never in jeopardy.*)

"I would also like to announce that we did NOT come in last place in the Pro-Am and Ray and I were not rushed to the hospital immediately after the round, even though the temperature was 94 with 90% humidity."

Seriously, I'd like to encourage all superintendents to apply for the program. It is an all-expense paid trip to Moline, IL, three nights at a nice hotel, two days of golf, numerous meals, entertainment and the opportunity to spend some quality time with your boss. The tee prizes were not too shabby, either. Having the opportunity to play the Deere Run course right before the John Deere Classic was a treat. The John Deere people and GCSAA did a fantastic job of organizing the event. It was amazing how smoothly everything ran. During breakfast the day of the Pro-Am, Jim Colbert gave a talk highlighting some humorous moments during his career with other pros. He also is on record as stating that superintendents are the most important and well-educated members of the golf course management team and that we should take more initiative in becoming the leaders at our facilities.

The following is a diary of our activities at the John Deere Superintendent Employer Recognition Program.

First Day: Sunday July 21

Ray flew out of Oakland; I drove down to Orange County to see my wife, get my travel bags and flew out of John Wayne Airport. My plane was crowded, dirty and the movie was a dumb animation. How can they charge \$5 for a head set anyway? I arrived at Moline about 4:30 p.m. The opening reception was at 6:00 p.m., so I was feeling a bit rushed. A John Deere representative met five of us at the airport and had us on a nice big bus and on our way. After a brief stop at the hotel, they drove us to John Deere Headquarters for a nice cocktail & hors d'oeuvres

reception. The Deere Headquarters building is quite impressive. The reception was held in a display area with memorabilia and equipment. Did you know you could buy a 12-Row Corn Combine for only \$233,000.00? We then had a nice chicken dinner, welcoming talk from Gregg Brenningmeyer, Dir. of Sales & Marketing, and found out that our other two team players were from a course in Casper, WY. For a tour pro, we drew Brad Fabel, a very nice 18-year tour player who was just coming off shoulder surgery, we found out the next day. It was then back on the bus to the hotel. We kindly declined an invitation from Sal, our local John Deere salesman, for a "night cap." I picked up my registration goodies which I hadn't had time to do before the reception; Odyssey putter, very nice travel bag, pro-am money clip, dozen Pro V 1's, hat, John Deere shirt and a tee towel. I got to bed about 10:00 p.m. IL time.

Second Day: Monday July 22

At 7:30 a.m. We met for breakfast at Planted Earth in the John Deere Commons across from the Radisson hotel. We had a very nice buffet style breakfast with about anything you would want, except Bloody Marys or Screw Drivers!

"Moline is one of the cleanest towns I have ever been in. Just a good 'ole mid-west country town dominated by John Deere."

After breakfast, Jim Colbert, the Senior PGA Tour player gave his short talk. Did you know GCSAA pays him to wear our logo on his shirt? It was then back on the buses and out to Deere Run TPC where we were assigned our caddies. These were local high school golfers that Deere had recruited. Deere donates \$50.00 each to their golf programs. We were asked not to tip the caddies. I drew Andrew, a very likeable son of a doctor who was a great help.... carrying water, towels and the ball my Dad made a hole in one with. I told Andrew I wanted to use it on the par 3's if there wasn't a chance I could lose it. He would pull it out and remind me. I have never had a hole in one, still haven't! Our tee time wasn't until 12:30, so we had plenty of time to practice... and sweat. Fabel didn't play that well, our high handicapper never made a par and Ray kept hitting it in the woods!

"He claimed because we were playing from the white tees, he kept hitting it through the fairway. I had to start pointing out that the fairway was in front of us, not to the right or left."



I made 4 of 4 sandies from fairway bunkers and 1 of 1 from greens bunkers. Only one birdie. We shot a net 63. Steve Mona, Gregg Brenningmeyer, Randy Nicols (past Pres. GCSAA) and Bob Anderson with Hank Kuene won the tournament. My protests went unheard! After the tournament there was food and the awards ceremony in the John Deere hospitality tent behind the 18th green. Again, a very nice affair. It was back on the bus and back to the hotel. We declined another invitation for a "night cap" from Sal took a much needed shower and into bed.

Third Day: July 23

Breakfast at Planted Earth at 7:30 a.m. and on the bus to Dearborn C.C. across the mighty Mississippi in WS. We played a four-man scramble, WITH carts, thank god, but without Sal, who didn't make it. Our third was Mike Sherman, Division Manager, Golf and Turf Leasing. Fore caddies were optional, but we hired Andrew again. Ray kept asking him for direction and advice, as if it could do any good! We alternated hitting Sal's ball between the three of us. We shot a 68 that turned out to be good for third place in the second division worth \$25.00 each. I spent Sal's share and Ray gave me his so I could buy a shirt. The weather was much better, with the temperature only about 83.

"The course was very nice, old style. The 18th hole was about as hard a finishing hole as I've ever played. Bogey was our best ball."

At 6:30 p.m. there was a reception with hors d'oeuvres and an open bar at the Deere display room in the John Deere Commons. I actually got a chance to sit in that 12-Row Corn Combine this time! At 8:00 p.m. the Beach Boys concert started (*Ray said that he had heard of them from his Dad.*) The concert was held in an in-door arena on the other side of the hotel. After the concert we declined another "night cap" from Sal and headed for bed.

Day 4 July 24

Buses ran on the hour all day to the airport. My flight wasn't until about 12:30 p.m., so after breakfast at Planted Earth I had a couple of hours putting up with my ribbing.