

RESOLVED TO RENOVATE

By Mike McCullough, Director of Turfgrass Services, NCGA

If one of the resolutions for the New Year involves renovating or doing some other remodeling projects on the golf course, then perhaps you might want to call and check with the NCGA Course Rating Department for correct protocol.

The golf course is rated on its effective playing length and difficulty under normal conditions. If there are any changes to the difficulty, length or normal playing conditions, then Handicap Indexes can become distorted.

For example, if a tee reconstruction project occurs and the tees are lengthened, then a club official needs to contact the NCGA to establish the new official yardage. The addition of a set of new tees also merits a phone call to the NCGA for a free measurement visit.

Other projects on the golf course whether large or small, can have an affect on the course's rating. For instance, the addition of a couple of small greenside bunkers on a relatively plain hole can elevate the rating. The reverse holds true when removing bunkers on the golf course, a lower rating.

The removal of large trees in play has an effect on the rating. Hazards that are made larger or smaller will also impact on how difficult or easy a hole plays.

Maintenance practices that superintendents perform on a daily basis can increase or decrease the course's difficulty as well. Any practices that alter the width or firmness of fairways, the height of cut for roughs, or the firmness or speed of putting surfaces for an extended amount of time should be reported to the NCGA.

Placement of tee markers and hole locations should be balanced for everyday play. These maintenance procedures as well as other cultural practices need to be carried out on a consistent month-to-month basis to avoid peaks and valleys in the playing difficulty of the course. Short-term aberrations for special events are normal, but the day-to-day course setup should be uniform.

Despite the fact the NCGA re-rates courses on a six-year basis (new courses every three years), club officials should not wait until the next re-rating visit to report any course modifications or changes in maintenance practices. Waiting to communicate any changes can have adverse affects to members' Handicap Indexes.

To avoid any arguments on the first tee regarding Indexes prior to a friendly wager, report any changes made to the golf course to the NCGA. Hopefully, this will eliminate some of the Hatfield's vs. McCoy's feuds concerning Indexes or the rating.

Cultural Differences Are Important When Supervising Hispanic Workers at a Golf Facility

By: Rafael Barajas, CGCS, Hacienda Golf Club, La Habra Heights, CA

The number one difference seen is a perception of work ethics. Many Anglos in this country were raised with a Protestant work ethic or belief that one must work hard in order to achieve a desired lifestyle. Hispanics, on the other hand, have a more laid-back culture and are often perceived in the U.S. as being "lazy." For example, on the golf course, when a golfer sees more than one person working together, they may be viewed as wasting time. The reality is that many tasks are truly better accomplished with two people, based on time constraints, weight to be lifted, etc.

Another difference is in the tone of voice. In the U.S. culture, a supervisor who uses a forceful tone of voice when assigning tasks or making corrections is viewed as assertive. To a Hispanic worker, it is insulting to be addressed in such a manner, when a gentle tone is all that is necessary. If you consider the power structures in Latin American cultures, this makes sense. Only a few people rule and they have all the power, so the common people get used to being basically powerless, both in work and society. When Hispanic workers come here, they continue to be very accepting, which may be perceived as too passive or even lazy.

Again, it is important to note that perceived differences are usually misinterpretations, based on one's own values. Incorrect assumptions can be overcome by working to see through another's perspective.

Realize that cultural differences tend to affect one's perceptions. Judgments made based on those perceptions can be unfair out of their cultural context.