



Resolutions

By David Oatis, director, Northeast Region

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Some say that making New Year's resolutions is a bad idea because they so rarely are adhered to and failure can affect our psyche. I'm certainly no psychologist, but I'd put that up there with being afraid to "say no" to your kids for fear of harming their psyche. The way I see it, kids need boundaries and we need goals. But, (there is always a but, isn't there?) make them positive and achievable. Resolving not to miss "wing night" at your favorite watering hole this year might be achievable, but it's not the positive type of goal I'm referring to.

So what are your resolutions? Here are a few to consider if you're drawing a blank:

- For superintendents: resolve to be positive. Moods are contagious, and one person in a sour mood can bring everyone else down to their level. Let's face it, there are plenty of things to be negative about, but people come to your golf course to have fun, so don't ruin it for them. Besides, no one wants to hear your negativity anyway.
- For golfers: resolve to be positive. Don't look for the negatives in your facility, and more importantly, don't blame your golf inadequacies on the course or its condition. Golf is an outdoor game, and conditions are supposed to vary. Variety is one of golf's greatest attractions! Remember why you took the game up in the first place and enjoy it.
- Get healthy. I know that's a stretch for some of us (especially coming from someone who gets out of breath tying his shoes these days), but what set of resolutions doesn't address health? Health affects attitude, and attitude affects performance. Exercise would be good, but if you really don't have time, resolving just to walk rather than ride whenever you play golf would be a wonderful start. Walking your course, or at least a portion of it, every

day would be even better. Oh, and don't neglect your mental health. Read a book on a subject other than golf or turf. Starting the New Year refreshed will help your attitude and it will help you to perform better.

- Pet your dog and take him for a run. He'll be healthier and so will you.
- Evaluate your programs fairly. Don't change for the sake of change, but, by the same token, don't be afraid to change if there is good reason to do so: i.e. you want better results or want to save money. A wise turf professor told me many years ago: "don't be the first and don't be the last to try something new." It's still good advice.
- When it comes to saving money, evaluate the risk benefit ratio. A key to working through your budget dilemma is to go back to basics. We can agonize over a lot of different line items and pet projects, but keeping the basics in mind will help. What matters the most? The order will vary by golf course, but I'd prioritize in this way: greens, fairways, tees, bunkers, roughs. Notice, I didn't mention flowers, but the clubhouse grounds are a good place for (a few of) them.

I apologize if these resolutions aren't very inspiring, but they don't need to be inspiring to provide benefit. Good luck on those resolutions, and see you in New Orleans!

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