



WISE WORDS

As we look to the dark nights and cooler, wetter weather why not prepare to improve the course without actually stepping outside the maintenance yard!

David Golding, GTC's Education Director recalls his days as an apprentice and offers a few ideas, which cannot fail to pay dividends for both staff and the golfers.

I know we talk about climate change and the implications of milder winters, all year growth and efforts to supply the golfers with all year round golf but there are still days when we really do need to "cabin up" and look at the maintenance of the golf course furniture, tools and equipment.

I remember my apprenticeship days back at Buxton and High Peak GC, when January and February were the months when we had painted the tee markers and flagsticks for the umpteenth time, varnished the benches and the gang-mowers were in bits all over the shed awaiting hasty assembly sometime during March!

We often became painters and decorators in the clubhouse when the inevitable snow descended over the Peak District, hence the multi-skilled label we greenkeepers wore and many still do for that matter.

I know that the majority of your time is still spent on the course both with the on-going maintenance tasks but more and more reconstruction seems to be the order of the day, so when do you address staff training?

More and more Course Managers have a designated time during the week when training takes place and that is the way forward, but bad weather days seem an obvious time when so much can be achieved by both formal and informal training sessions.

The GTC can provide the support Learning Materials and the Approved Training Providers will assess you to identify the evidence required for staff to receive certification and qualifications where appropriate.

The Training Providers can arrange specialist short courses and BIGGA are also becoming increasingly involved, as major providers, often spurred on by the BIGGA Sections requesting local education and training linked to the formal work-based qualifications, this is good news.

Certificates of Competence or Vocational Qualifications are the work-based options but any craft training given can be programme, by using the national standards. For example, N/SVQ Level 2 Sports Turf standards are clearly detailed in the GTC training manual.

A Course Manager operating as trainer and mentor is without doubt a golf clubs finest asset when we are looking at staff development.

The support now available from both training providers and manufacturers/dealers should give Course Managers the confidence to prepare, plan and implement a programme for all staff and don't forget to involve the employers!



The GTC are continually working with the full support of the English, Scottish and Welsh Golfing Unions to engage the employers through seminars, our On Course newsletter and the various organisations websites.

There is much talk about the historical problems of identifying the employer at the traditional members golf clubs and whilst proprietary owned courses have often one person "in charge" and the more resort type courses have General Managers with overall responsibility, we must ensure Course Managers remain skilled, professional and patient people who can maintain and manage courses often operating in isolation and in difficult circumstances.

The R&A, in promoting their sustainable golf course programme, are continually trying to engage employers, however as with the development of Course Policy Documents, it is often the Course Managers who instigates the work in the best interests for the long term benefits to the golfer and the golf course.

My personal advice would always be that, as a Course Manager, do not undertake any policy or programme without full support of your employer and concentrate on ensuring your team, no matter how large or small, are trained to allow you to maintain and manage the course to the highest standard possible as detailed in the employer led course policy document!

The cost of the Training Manual is £25.00.

Learning Materials Level 2 CD-Rom - £30.00
 Learning Materials Level 2 printed papers including CD-Rom - £120.00

Learning Materials Level 3 CD-Rom - £30.00
 Learning Materials Level 3 printed papers including CD-Rom - £120.00

Prices are quoted inclusive of VAT, postage and packing for those purchasing within the UK. Prices may vary for countries outside the UK - please check on application.

Cheques/postal orders are to be made payable to the Greenkeepers Training Committee Ltd.

Overseas purchases - please send a 'Sterling Draft' drawn on an English Bank for the total cost.

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