

Inform Your Golfers — One Method to Make Our Jobs a Little Easier

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One of the most important tools a superintendent has at his disposal is his ability to communicate. Proper use of communication skills can help alleviate many problems throughout the year. By keeping people informed, we take away the "speculation factor" from them. We shouldn't limit our communication efforts to our board members (or our bosses), but also to the golf professional and his staff, the general manager, and the entire membership or golfing public as the case may be.

Okay — we all knew this stuff already. My purpose here is to demonstrate one seemingly small and simple method to communicate to every person employed by or using our facilities what we are up to on any given day. It's a way to avoid comments like, "If I'da known they were gonna do that, I woulda worn my other shoes," or "Why wasn't I told they were doing that." Quite simply, POST A BULLETIN.

This is not a new idea, and I'm sure many clubs already do this. There are just a few tips to use if you are planning to implement this idea:

- ★ Make it professional and neat-looking — Magic marker on cardboard or hand-written placards will not enhance our image as professionals. Appearance counts!

- ★ Make it accessible — Locate the bulletin where everyone can see it (e.g. the first tee, or the Pro Shop).

- ★ Make it durable — use materials that will hold up and keep their appearance in all types of weather.



"Aurora C.C. bulletin with removable magnetic strips"

- ★ Make it easily changeable — The last thing you need is to spend a lot of valuable time accomplishing such a simple task.

The method chosen at Aurora Country Club is a steel sign with interchangeable magnetic strips which can be added or removed daily to keep our golfers and staff informed of our maintenance practices and conditions. We started with a typical real estate sales sign with our club logo and four categories (Greens — Tees — Fairways — General) affixed permanently. Then we used magnetic strips with printed information on them to attach under the appropriate categories for any given day. Our cup changer starts his day by making any changes to the sign that apply (e.g. if we've had a heavy rain, he'll put the "Standing Water" magnet and/or the "Carts in Rough Only"



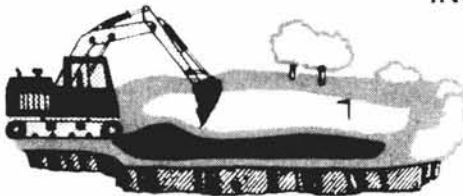
"Bartlett Hills bulletin with removable wooden slats, hinged and padlocked for security."

magnet under the Fairway category, or the "Topdressing" magnet under the Greens category if we are topdressing that day). Any sign company can custom-make your bulletin to fit your course's particular needs, and at a relatively low cost.


If security or vandalism is a concern, I've seen other superintendent's methods to deal with it. While Joel Purpur was at Bartlett Hills Golf Club, he fashioned a similar sign by welding angle iron into a frame with a hinged top and padlock whereby wooden slats engraved with the necessary information could slide in and out each day. To add an aesthetic quality, the frame was welded to a post mounted in a flower planter with cedar slat sides similar to the "Burdett Divot Buckets" (and without having to replace any lids), making the sign attractive, functional, and most importantly, difficult to steal.

I'm sure there are other ways to accomplish this task; my point being that it is a task well worth the investment — it enhances our image as professionals, it saves us the time and effort of verbally communicating to everyone what we are doing, and it demonstrates further our dedication to helping make the people who pay our salaries enjoy their game a little more.

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