

If You Are a Golf Course Dog, Read This!

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One of the hottest topics in our industry right now is the use of dogs to control geese. Everyone seems to be getting into the act, as is evidenced by the “for-hire goose chasers” we’ve been receiving literature from and the Border collie barrage (“Send check or C.O.D. for \$3,000 before midnight tonight”).

Don’t get me wrong, I am a staunch advocate of pretty much everything that’s fashionable, from environmentally- friendly methods of pest removal to Audubon certification to cosmetic surgery. The thing about this is that with the means we are employing to achieve these ends, I have begun to take notice of the potential “risks” involved. If you were expecting a serious diatribe about the hazards and legal ramifications of dogs running rampant on your golf course, stop here—you ain’t gettin’ it. My purpose here is to relate a few experiences that some of our fellow goose-chasing, dog-using superintendents have had in an effort to merely entertain. So feel free to go to the “library,” relax, and don’t forget to give your extra green chairman copy to your dog. I suppose my own two pets, Dingo and Boomer, could fill this entire article with their exploits, but I am an equal-opportunity writer, so I have included others.



Okay, dogs, here’s what NOT to do:

Do NOT chase, chew on, or bury golf balls. My first season at Aurora started with a very good golfer and future green chairman having his approach shot at No. 13 stolen by Dingo, who then chewed it up and buried it. This could have been a nasty scene had it been a midseason money game; but luckily, it was a leisurely game with his wife, so it cost me a dozen Titleists as retribution.

Do NOT kill foxes, squirrels,

ducklings, or any other animals deemed “cute” by those plaid-clad humans you can only see in black and white—ESPECIALLY don’t do it in their presence! If you feel the urge to grab and shake something, make it a paint can.

Do NOT bite people unless they are in polyester suits and carrying a huge briefcase full of aerosol cans. No matter how adept you are at scaring off geese, members will not accept tooth marks in their backsides. Boomer has

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done this twice to my knowledge, and both times were to the same person—former club president/Chamber of Commerce/Rotarian/basically bigwig-type without a sense of humor. Please save your master the embarrassment of having to be seen at the Sans-a-belt store buying replacement pants.

Do NOT get arrested. Your masters are plenty good enough at that. Kevin DeRoo's dog was snatched right out of the Bartlett Hills parking lot by the local constabulary, taken downtown, booked and printed. You guys don't EVER want to go through an experience like that—especially the cavity search part.

Do NOT eat everything your masters throw. I know you're color-blind, but anything dark in a shiny plastic packet that is tossed into a pond is taboo. According to the master of this particular dog, it takes about two weeks for Lesco Pond Colorant to fade completely off of a tongue.

Do NOT stay outside in a thunderstorm. Even if you're tied outside with a metal chain to a metal spike, figure out a way to

get inside. This dog, having survived countless squishings by various tires, rollers, etc. (thus his name, Speed Bump), could not survive the wrath of Mother Nature, which came in the form of a lightning bolt. Hopefully for him, the old adage is true, and all dogs DO go to heaven.

Do NOT eat lightbulbs, staples, screws, bearings, or any other neat, shiny things you might find on the floor of your master's shop. You don't like going to the vet anyway, and your master might just decide that the time is ripe for a new goose-chaser, and the only good news for you is that it will be your last shot.


Do NOT chase coyotes—you'll lose.

Do NOT act stupid. If your master is holding court with some of those black-and-white people you see on the course every day, and he says, "Blah blah," then sit down. If he says, "Blah blahblah," then roll over. If he seems mad and says, "Blah blah Bluck blah-blah blah," it's time to go lay down in the office. Obeying these commands will greatly increase the likelihood that you'll grow old on this course (unless, of course,

you stay out in thunderstorms).

Do NOT roll around in your own waste. I personally can not fathom why any of God's creatures would do this on purpose, but for some reason, it seems to appeal to you guys. Thing is, it does NOT appeal to your master's masters (the black-and-whites). Once they've caught a whiff of you, you'll go from "the superintendent's dog" to "the superintendent's smelly dog," which is not in your best interest. On a related note, either learn to catch mice in your shops, or let the cat do it—just don't eat the big clumps of kitty litter! Those are not treats, but simply another way of showing your masters just how far along the evolutionary chain you've progressed (or regressed).

And finally: Do NOT forget why you are there—to chase GEESE. It's how your masters rationalize your existence to the black-and-whites. There are a thousand Border collies out there that are trained and ready to go, so don't get lazy.

Okay, now give this back to your masters, if you haven't chewed it up. 

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