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Thank God it's July! If we haven't heard every imaginable complaint by now, we will this month. The greens are too hard or too soft, too fast or too slow. The fairways are too short, or too long. You've probably received all of these criticisms in the same day. How about the ever popular, "Why can't we have conditions like XYZ Country Club?" Ironically, this question usually comes on the heels of having a member of XYZ Country Club who was playing your golf course yesterday lament that he wishes his club could be similar in condition to yours.

With the promise of increased heat and humidity, disease pressure, drought, normal wear and tear, and trying to finish up those "special" projects that seemed to pop up during the last few months, July promises to be a very difficult month. At least in August we can look forward to Labor Day.

I have often thought that the most successful golf course superintendents I have met, haven't necessarily been the ones most skilled at growing grass.

They are all very good turf managers, but more importantly, they are good people managers, who are even-tempered enough to absorb criticism without lashing out at the critic.

Dealing with adversity is an essential part of being a good golf course manager. We are faced with challenges outside of our control on a regular basis. If you do not have the ability to go with the flow and adjust accordingly, you will not last long in this profession. Your staff will lose respect for you, and your employer will become disenchanted as well. That's why attending monthly meetings is so enjoyable. It gives us all the opportunity to share our common frustrations.

Most people, if a situation is communicated effectively, will understand your plight and may even be sympathetic to it. Dealing with such people is easy. The difficult people, although they ask for an explanation, really aren't as interested in the reasons for less than ideal conditions. They're more interested in venting their frustrations and attempting to get a rise out of you. Hopefully, most of us do not have this caliber of person in a position of authority over us.

I am convinced that a certain minority of people are not satisfied unless they have something to complain about, and can make someone else as miserable as they are. In fact, I once had a club president who commented to me that there is 5% of the membership, who, if he announced that monthly dues had been cut by \$25, would complain that it should have been a \$30 or \$50 reduction. Experience teaches you who

those people are and you learn not to debate them. In fact, I have found that many times the best way to defuse the situation is to just let them spew and sputter, no matter how wrong they may be, without attempting to correct them or rationalize current conditions or some decision that you made that they have taken umbrage with. I may follow up with letters to them at a later date detailing the reasons why we could not accommodate their requests or correct their criticisms, but I try not to waste too much time engaged in arguments that I cannot win.

I am often reminded of a quote, which I heard many years ago at a commencement address. The speaker said that in life, sometimes you have to let some people be right to make up for them not being anything else. How true.

Most of us who look objectively at the people we deal with day in and day out would agree that the vast majority of them are pleasant and agreeable. By and large, they are appreciative of the work that we do. Try to remember that during the next few weeks as you deal with a variety of summer stresses.

