



# Batter Up!

*Believe it or not, one of the most difficult things about being president of the Midwest is writing a monthly message. I have been struggling to come up with some inspirational subject that would set the golf course maintenance community on fire. Well, guess what? It's not happening! So what will be this month's subject? BASEBALL—or, to be exact, the similarities between running a golf course and coaching a little-league team.*

*... I love my job and coaching baseball but as with anything in life, there are those times that they both drive me crazy.*

To start off, I'd like to say that I love my job **and** coaching baseball but as with anything in life, there are those times that they both drive me crazy. For example, during a recent frost delay in May, a golfer asked me how long it would be before play would begin. My response was, "Three hours." (It happened to be around 6:00 a.m.) I might as well have hit him in the face. This guy couldn't believe it was going to take three hours for the frost to melt. I then told him that if I had said "30 minutes" and the frost hadn't melted, he would most likely be more upset with me since I am the one responsible for the frost in the first place; however, if I got the course open before the three hours was up, he would be happy.

This is much like dealing with the parents who are living their baseball career through their kids. I was involved in a situation a couple days ago. The game I was coaching went into extra innings. Our pitcher gave up two runs in the top of the seventh. The kid was tired and had to be pulled. We were forced to use one of our star pitchers for two-thirds of an inning. I wanted to save the kid for the next day's game, but I also wanted to win the game we were playing. Let me tell you, having junior pitch for two-thirds of an inning did not sit well with his father. According to him, it was a sin to waste his son's talents at that juncture—he should have been put in a lot sooner. I explained what I was trying to accomplish but he, like Mr. Frost Delay, was not going to listen. You cannot please everyone all the time!

Another parallel between golfers and kids in little league is that both don't listen or maybe they simply hear only what they want to hear. How many times do you get that deer-in-the-headlights look when, after 2.5" of rain, you tell Mr. Cart Paths Only to stay on the path rather than drive through every puddle of water to get to his ball? It's remarkably similar to when I have to tell Johnny 10 times not to swing the bat in the dugout and he gives me that same look, like I am speaking Chinese to him.

The last similarity I'd like to discuss is garbage. When I was young, I was taught not to litter. Some of you must remember "Don't be a litter bug." What ever happened to that concept? It seems that we are spending an increasing amount of time picking up trash on the course, even though there are garbage cans everywhere. I have no choice but to think that people, in general, don't like to throw garbage in the "proper receptacle." It's much easier to throw it on the ground. Those of you who have never had the pleasure of spending some time in a little-league dugout won't understand the common denomina-

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## Honoring John Ebel

On June 6, 75 friends and family members gathered at beautiful Barrington Hills Country Club to attend a memorial celebration in honor of John Calvin Ebel. John, of course, had spent 22 years at BHCC as the superintendent.


After several rainy days, the sun was out to grace those in attendance. More than one-third of the crowd was from the green industry (what a friendly fraternity!). Following an opening prayer and a compelling word of Scripture, several people stood and spoke about the place John had shared in their lives. Much has already been written of that in the pages of our publication and it was again a blessing to witness how the Lord had moved in the life of one John Ebel.

Afterwards, there was a light lunch and many old friendships were renewed. It was indeed a celebration and I suspect that without exception, those in attendance know how blessed they were to have known John.

Brian Bossert, CGCS  
Bryn Mawr Country Club

On Course . . . (continued from page 3)

tor here, so let me explain. A little-league dugout is one small step above a gas-station bathroom as far as cleanliness goes—you'll find sunflower seeds, gum, plastic bottles and many other things I don't want to touch. I finally figured out where the kids are learning the habit of littering: from the golfers who play my course.

I know I could keep you all entertained indefinitely with my ramblings on baseball and golf, however, I was three days late writing this article because of baseball and golf and I have to get some work done. I hope to see you all at the Merit Club later this month. 

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