



# Palm Beach Trade Winds



By MICHAEL J. BAILEY  
Boca Greens Country Club

## “A TRULY UNIQUE INDIVIDUAL”

The description of a Golf Course Superintendent is truly unique. Few other managerial positions within any industry require such diversification of knowledge as that of a Golf Course Superintendent. One most obviously have “a little knowledge in Horticulture”; however, this is only the beginning. Expertise must also expand to many other areas such as: management, accounting, business transactions, secretarial, public relations, psychology, chemistry, technical analyses, design, irrigational, mechanical, ecological, and any thing else just short of being god-like, because you always are supposed to at least “have a green thumb.”

Considering there are over a hundred golf courses in Palm Beach County, very few courses are truly similar in nature, the span goes from public to very exclusive private courses and from 9 hole to 90 hole complexes. With such a diversification of knowledge and courses, is there such a thing as a stereotype Golf Course Superintendent? Well, of course not! Superintendents are probably some of the most unique people in the world! I have asked many Superintendents in Palm Beach County the question “Why are you unique?” Considering there are over 100 courses in Palm Beach County, what is it that makes you uniquely special in comparison to your peers? Just why do you exceed better than anyone else? These questions were asked without being quoted to allow the individual the freedom of revealing their true inner feeling, without the fear of embarrassment. Replies are as follows:

“I try to make my people happy, whether they are the workers, the members, or my boss. I treat people the way I would want them to treat me, because I am in a service business. This is maybe not unique, but the attitude I feel is unique, because I care about service. For example, if the members desire to have trees, we plant them. If they desire to have them removed, after mutual discussion, we remove them. I am not necessarily a ‘yes man’, but rather a service oriented Superintendent. Since Greens Committee Chairmen change yearly, goals, objectives, and areas of concentration change yearly. If the Superintendent can not visualize and accept the changes, then he is not performing a service to his Club.”

“Having the broad knowledge of all phases of golf course maintenance, from construction through the aspects of maintenance of both northern and southern turf management programs, I feel that being able to use these experiences on a day-by-day basis, and relating this to the work crew, I can get the most out of my crew and make the course look the very best within my capabilities.”

“I have the ability to communicate with the working management personnel at their levels. I have the ability to set up programs, whether they be for management, personnel management, or developmental projects and see that they are followed through with completeness and

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thoroughness resulting in a product of the highest standards."

"I know what my objectives are, and I use all the means available to accomplish my goal, which is to have it perfect. I put 100% of my energies toward accomplishing that goal."

"I am a perfectionist and my inability to accept mediocracy produces constant frustration when dealing with mother nature. Because of this difficulty, I must constantly be striving for the best product available within my ability."

"I am a very good golfer and I feel that I can play as well as many of the club Professionals. I look at the golf course from a good golfer's point of view. I look at the height of cut, quality, contour of fairways, placement of trees, and thereby look at the points of view from not only aesthetics, but from the point of play from the low handicap to the high handicapper."

"I am good at getting the required job done by employee motivation. Even though the laborers low pay, along with the lack of professional skills, makes getting the job done most difficult. Considering these restrictions within my capabilities, I am able to overcome these problems and perform a job well because of my ability to motivate within. Motivation is the key to my success.

"I have the ability to maintain an above average golf course for an elderly membership that is not appreciative nor knowledgeable about the agronomics of maintaining a small, tight golf course."

"I have the ability to respond to adversity under pressure. I am able to maintain a level of consistency year round, even though the diversity of foul weather and the amount of heavy play can have diverse effects upon the golf course. There are so few Superintendents that are subject to my unique problems of an old course with heavy play, yet be able to maintain above standards for consistency of play."

"I enjoy communication on a regular basis with other Superintendents while I solicit and advise opinions regarding our industry. I want my golf course to be the very best as I will not tolerate problems, while other Superintendents will allow things to just slide by."

"I have the patience and flexibility to deal with various personalities and individuals at a private country club, whether they are the laborers, accounting department, board of directors, golf pros, club manager, or my superior, the greens committee chairman. This gives me the ability to produce excellent playing conditions year-round."

"My position as a Golf Course Superintendent

exists because of the fact that I've had a good education in turfgrass management and I've had a chance to work under a first class Superintendent. Although I'm young, and have not had many years of practical experience, my desire to learn and work many long hours has propelled me quickly through the ranks to become a Superintendent."

"Rather than settling for the ordinary, I strive to set a precedent of professionalism as a golf course manager that others will look toward as unique, but achievable objective, which is to make the golfing experience as enjoyable as possible to the membership and their guests. I also want my maintenance operation to provide an enjoyable learning experience to my employees with the intent to create a strong sense of pride regarding job performance."

"I have the ability to be in charge of a complex of large magnitude at a rather young age, which reveals to upper management, an ability to supervise with maturity. Because of this freedom, I am even more aware of my power and I capitalize on the advantages of this fact. I do not abuse my privilege, but rather more acutely manage to the best of my ability, which I feel is better than what anyone else could do."

In summary, I believe there is a common denominator regarding the dominant attitude of Golf Course Superintendents.

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We are individuals of total dedication to a profession that we are keenly proud of. We do not want to be stereotyped as "just people who supervise the mowing of the grass," but rather "managers of a highly sophisticated and technical science of golf course management." We are individuals with creative minds that must constantly be one step ahead of the membership and management. Because of this mental awareness to constantly be on top of a vast amount of land both agronomically and financially, we find ourselves constantly being mentally alert, innovative, and seldom going out and just having a "relaxing round of golf." ■

## Lofts Presents Rutgers With \$27M Royalty

Bound Brook, NJ — Lofts, Inc. recently presented Rutgers University with one of the largest royalty checks New Jersey's state university has ever received. Jon Loft, Lofts President and Chairman of the Board, presented a check for \$26,764.02 to Dr. Lowell A. Douglas, Chairman of the Department of Soils and Crops.

The check represented a total of the royalties due on all seed from the 1982 harvest of Mystic Kentucky bluegrass, and several perennial ryegrasses - Palmer, Diplomat, Yorktown and Yorktown II (Domestic and European). All these varieties were developed at Rutgers University.

Mr. Loft described the occasion as "another link in the continuing chain of turf developmental programs between Lofts and Rutgers." The royalties play a role in the development of new varieties, because the money is used to sponsor further research and education.

At the ceremony, which took place on September 8, Dr. Douglas expressed his appreciation for Loft's cooperation. "The development of new varieties becomes more meaningful," Dr. Douglas noted, "when a company like Lofts promotes them, because Lofts' involvement increases public awareness that new varieties are available."

Also present at the ceremony were Rutgers researchers Dr. C. Reed Funk, Dr. Ralph Engel, Dr. Henry Indyk and Dr. Robert Duell. In addition, Lofts was represented by Dr. Rich Hurley, Vice President and Director of Research and Agronomy.

The presentation was held at Rutgers Horticultural Farm II on Ryders Lane in New Brunswick.

A similar ceremony occurred in August at the University of Rhode Island. At the University's Field Day, Dr. Richard Skogley was presented with a Lofts check for \$14,900. This represented royalties for one year's crop of Jamestown Chewings Fescue. ■