

Why Play Golf?

By John Boardman,
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To many people, we as superintendents, are in a very enviable position. We have free access to play at our own course and other courses which may not be accessible to the general public at any price. This is a benefit that many of us take for granted.

Playing golf is more than a fringe benefit for us. It plays an important part in our development in becoming better superintendents.

Maintaining a golf course provides an endless list of tasks that can be accomplished on a daily basis. We establish a set of priorities as to which tasks are most important to undertake. Often, we establish our priorities without fully considering those of the golfers. If we do consider them, we may not see their priorities as being important enough to take precedence over our own. This attitude can develop because we don't play enough golf to appreciate their positions. If we get out and play the game, we may find that certain practices are a little unfair and we should try to change them, or there may be areas on the course that deserve more attention. This will help develop a much better relationship with the people we work for.

Playing golf is a great way for us to take a slow, detailed look at our courses. Often, work routines take us around

the course via the quickest route. Or maybe we don't allow driving on the fairways so we stay off them too. Playing the course gives us a good look at each hole from tee to green.

Golfing is a great way to get to know someone. Any of us who have played with newcomers at our monthly meetings can attest to this. After one round of golf, you get the feeling that you know these people pretty well.

Golf is a great public relations tool to use with your membership, especially Board members. This is why our Superintendent Club Official Tournament is so valuable. We get to know our officials on a personal level and, more importantly, they get to know us on a level other than an employee who works on the course. Their opinions of us, as individuals, and, as a group, are elevated.

Playing with the Pro can be helpful to us. Few people communicate with the membership as much as the Pro does. Playing with the Pro is a great way to educate him about what's happening on the course, which, in turn, helps to educate the members.

An effective tool in motivating our own employees is to have them play golf also. If they can see the course from a perspective other than from a tractor, they can appreciate the course more and have a much better sense of purpose on their jobs.

While we have to be careful not to become overly involved in playing golf, we must keep in mind that it plays an important part in our professional growth and we should play as often as we can. ■

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