



DAVID MEDA

The force of the wind not only bent the flag pole, it shredded the flag. It took four thousand manhours of labor to repair the damage to the golf course.

Disaster Scenario No. 2: You leave a beautiful, tranquil golf course at 3 p.m. Friday. An hour later, you get a phone call...

'We've just had a tornado!'

BY DAVID MEDA

BOCARATON — It was May 27, 1988; the Boca Woods CC maintenance facility closed, gates locked, the evening yet to begin.

I was at home when I received a telephone call from the assistant general manager of the club. She said that they had had a bad storm and, from what she could see from the clubhouse, there had been quite a bit of damage. She mentioned trees down and a bent flagpole at the clubhouse with nothing but a shredded flag hanging from the top.

Since she was unable to contact Craig Foley, Boca Woods superintendent and my boss, she suggested that I might want to come down to check things out.

It was close to 4:30 p.m. and by this time the storm was passing through Boynton Beach. I thought nothing of it. It seemed like just another Florida afternoon rain shower. I then thought back to the phone conversation ("a shredded flag") and thought, "Maybe it's old."

I drove to the club. Everything on State Road 7 looked fine, until I entered Boca Woods CC.

It was a startling sight! Just picture leaving the club at 3 p.m. on Friday, the two picturesque golf holes facing the main entrance are manicured to perfection. Now imagine... in your worst nightmare... the two beautiful golf courses that you felt so proud of as you left earlier that evening were now destroyed by a tornado.

I could not believe my eyes. Flooded roads, blown-over trees, screened-in porches torn from homes, roofing tiles missing from housetops, and debris scattered over the entire project.

At the clubhouse, the manager showed me to the back of the dining room where I could view the golf courses. We both stood silently in awe.

My next stop was to evaluate the pumping stations; both systems checked out in operating condition.

During my travels, I met with my boss, and we decided to meet back at the maintenance building and try to get some of our employees to come in. Clogged storm drains had to be cleaned out.

After assessing damages, Craig concluded that there was nothing else we could do until dawn.

Saturday was decision-making day. Course closings, contracting cleanup services, and insurance evaluations were the main issues discussed by department representatives.

By mid morning, landscaping contractors were on the job, standing and chipping fallen trees in prime locations at the clubhouse and front entrance. The maintenance crews were out in full force, raking and blowing debris off greens — we were offering unlimited overtime to any employee willing to work.

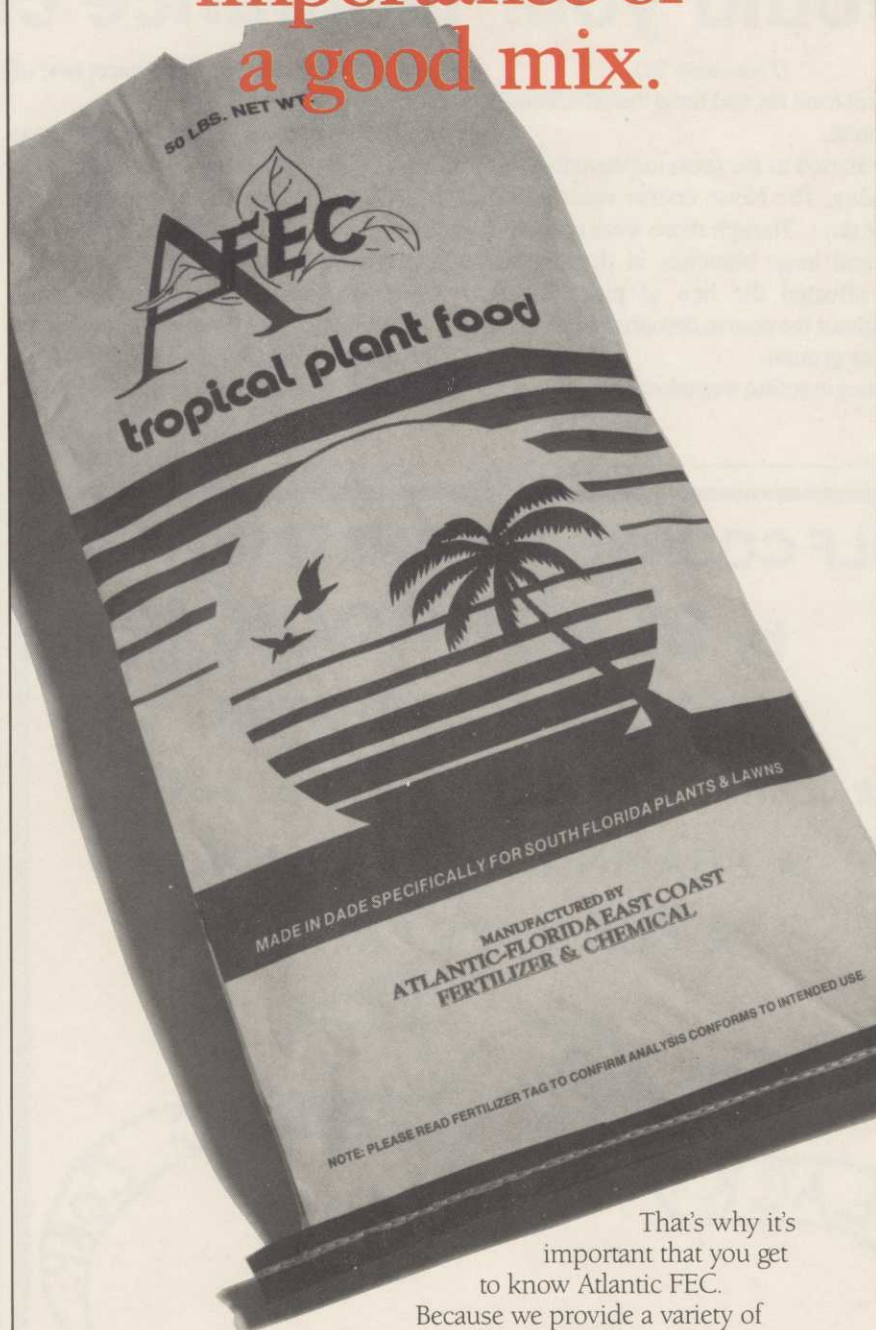
Boca Woods CC is a private, 36-hole development separated into North and South golf courses. Since the North course was not so severely damaged, we concentrated on making it playable as quickly as possible.

Maintenance practices were on schedule on the North course, but as far as the South course, maintenance was in direct correlation with the cleanup process. Greens were mowed Tuesday for the first time. Mowing heights were raised for the first two days and then dropped accordingly. Some fairways were so wet that they could not be mowed with a triplex mower for a week.

By midweek, the landscaping companies were working in concert on their designated areas as scheduled by Craig. A crew of 10 laborers, hired for the week,

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Would your insurance cover this?

(From page 55)

began at each tee and hand-raked debris to the green.

We started to see great improvement by Thursday. The North course was opened in five days. Though there were uprooted trees and large branches in the roughs, none affected the line of play. Ropes throughout the course detoured cart traffic to dryer ground.

Strategic action was taken in the mainte-

nance of the courses with an exception of the roughs.

Debris was stockpiled in segregated areas of the course until we had time to pick it up. Meanwhile, rough units and out-front mowers worked around the debris and mowed everything in sight.

As if the tornado damage were not enough to keep us busy, the landscape companies made things worse by running over satellite boxes, breaking hydraulic lines and

driving too close to a green, leaving four-inch tire tracks from a loaded truck of mulch.

On Friday, June 10, two weeks later, after 11.5 inches of rain, both courses were officially opened. Golfers, anxiously waiting, covered the courses by 9 a.m.

By 2 p.m., the courses were looking better, but with a lot of clearing still ahead.

The damage consisted of approximately 170 blown-over and snapped-off free-standing specimen trees, ranging from 30-foot ficus trees to 60-foot pines. We didn't count damaged trees in cypress hammocks and wooded areas.

It took about four thousand manhours to recover. Of that total, a thousand was contributed by the golf course maintenance department, 400 by contract labor and 2600 by landscape companies. The equipment included four chippers, one bobcat, one crane, two bucket trucks, one tree stump chipper and a trash-loading dump truck.

Not counting tree replacement, total damage has been estimated at \$100,000.

Would your insurance policy cover that kind of damage? Better check... because it could happen to you.

GOLF COURSE RECONSTRUCTION

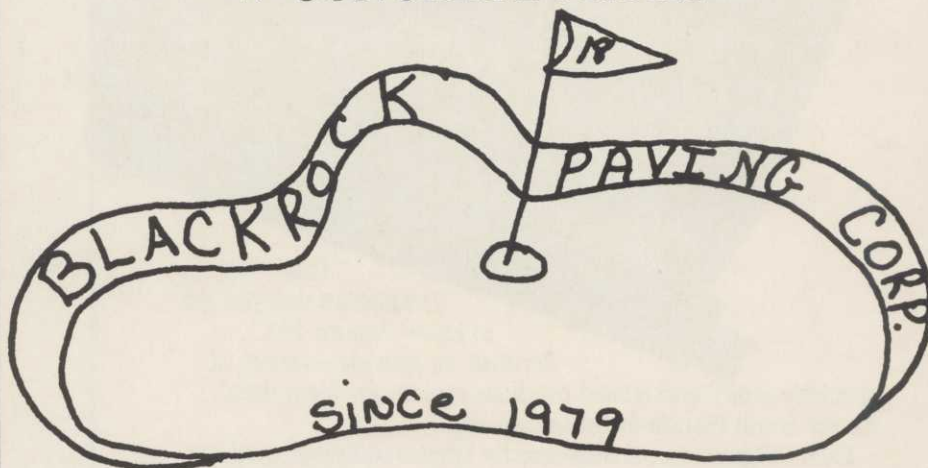
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EDITOR'S NOTE: David Meda is assistant superintendent at Boca Woods CC in Boca Raton. His most recent previous contribution to *The Florida Green* was on the role of an assistant superintendent.