

Superintendents: Offensive linemen of golf

Wise Words from Wisconsin

The Wisconsin GCSA's newsletter, *The Grass Roots*, edited by Monroe Miller, CGCS, is always chock full of good reading. Monroe's efforts have managed to earn the GCSAA's Best Editorial Content many years running. I found Chad Eberhardt's article "The Offensive Linemen of Golf" in the May/June issue worthy of sharing with all our readers. It is reprinted with their permission. — Joel D. Jackson, Editor.

BY CHAD EBERHARDT

Have you ever felt that the only time you ever got noticed, as a golf course superintendent, is when something goes wrong on the golf course?

It kind of makes you feel like an offensive lineman in football. After all, when they're executing correctly, offensive linemen go unnoticed by the average fan. In fact, the only time you will hear an offensive lineman singled out in the NFL is after he has committed a penalty and the referee announces his number.

Recognition and fame on offense usually starts with the quarterback, then goes to the running backs, wide receivers and tight ends. Then comes the offensive linemen.

But the truth of the matter is that the others would have little success if the offensive linemen weren't doing their jobs.

This anonymity is one of the reasons that good offensive linemen must have an enormous amount of self-esteem and self-confidence. They must believe they are good performers, capable of blocking anyone they may face.

Without this inner confidence, an offensive lineman always will be thinking about being defeated and not focusing on what he must do on each and every play.

Go ask the golf pro at your club which football position he thinks he can relate to. The answer will undoubtedly be the quarterback. After all, it's the most glamorous big money position on the team.

When the offense is successful, the praise is directed toward

the quarterback. When the offense fails, offensive linemen are usually at fault for lack of blocking.

Can you still relate? You bet!

Offensive linemen are the foundation for the whole team. They have to be solid. And they are.

In order to be successful, every position on a football team from the QB to the OL must work together to form a cohesive unit. Likewise, a partnership of mutual respect and understanding between the golf pro and the superintendent is invaluable to both. A true partnership is one in which the best interests of the club are promoted and maintained.

Have you ever wondered why we don't have a "Superintendent of the Year" award?

It's because of the same reason an offensive lineman doesn't win the NFL MVP award. There's nothing to base recognition upon. The only stats kept on an OL is his number of penalties.

Should the most valuable golf course superintendent be the one who has the fewest things go

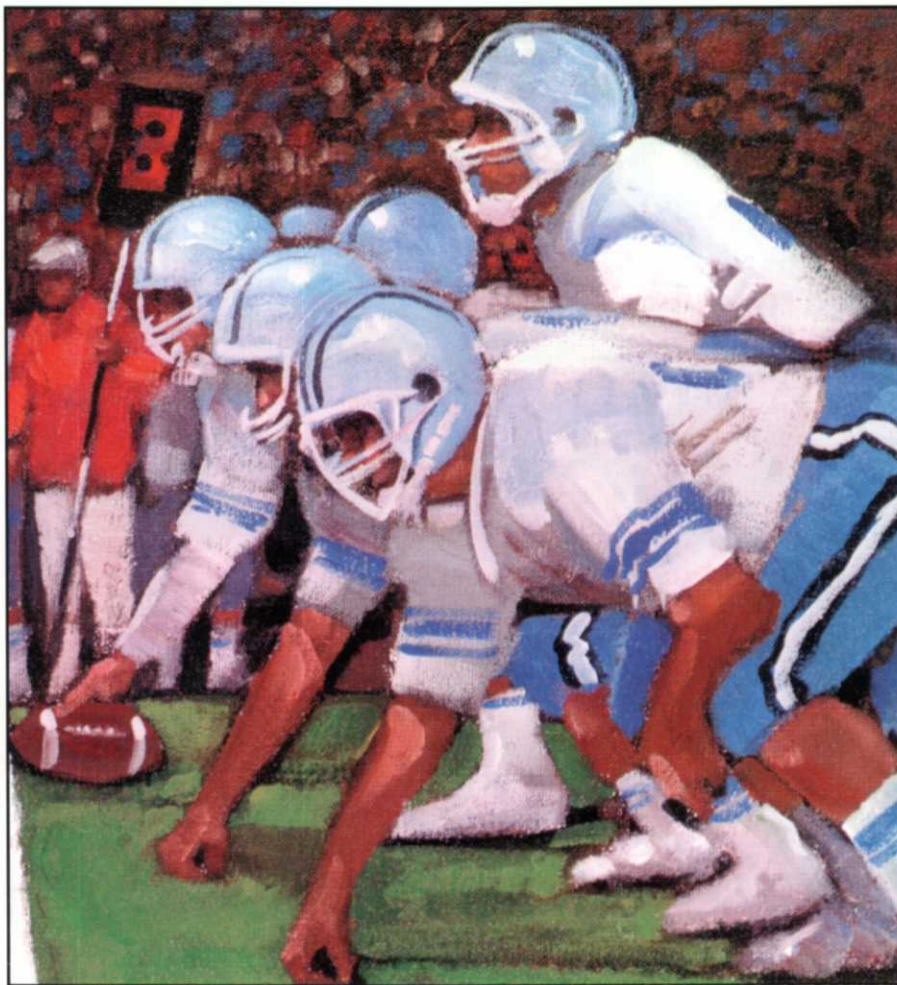
wrong in a year? Forget it! Recognition has to be a personal thing.

Use our friend, the good old offensive lineman, as an example. Mental toughness allows him to take the field on series after series, year after year. He knows each time that he is winning little battles that ultimately will be rewarded with a team victory.

With mental toughness comes a willingness and stubbornness to keep on trying, plus an enormous pride in individual performance on each and every down.

A good offensive lineman hangs in there and takes the shot, then lines up and does it again. His durability is impressive. They never miss a game or practice during the season. They can't. There cannot be any surprises.

Sounds very familiar, doesn't it?



Real superintendents don't wear earrings

One summer morning a few years ago, a young employee — a college student — came to work with a gold earring dangling from one ear.

David Noltner took one look at him and calmly offered this: "Jeff, I'm going over to my tool box, get a pair of big pliers and walk back. If you don't have that jewelry out of your ear when I get back, I'm going to yank it out with those pliers."

The kid never moved on the golf course as fast as he did removing his earring. He was lucky Dave wasn't offering a haircut; his long blond locks needed trimming. I was relating the story that night to my family. They didn't find it as humorous as I did. In fact, daughter Holly said, "I know, Dad. REAL superintendents don't wear earrings."

Some of Holly's friends do, though. The boys, I mean.

So, with thanks to Holly and apologies to the originator of "real men don't eat quiche," here's my REAL list for golf course superintendents.

- ◆ Real golf course superintendents don't wear earrings. Their employees don't wear them either. And they certainly don't wear gold necklaces.

- ◆ Real golf course superintendents wear work boots to the golf course. Not boat mocs and for sure not tennis shoes.

- ◆ A real golf course superintendent never wears \$75 slacks, especially to work.

- ◆ A real golf course superintendent owns at least ten pairs of blue jeans. He also still wears a belt, not as a fashion (mis)statement, but to keep his pants up. He doesn't believe wrinkles are "in vogue" either.

- ◆ Real golf course superintendents discard a shirt or pair of pants when it's worn out, not when it's out of fashion.

- ◆ A real golf course superintendent doesn't wear cologne to work; he would rather smell like the shop than a house of ill repute.

- ◆ A real golf course superintendent is never mistaken for the club's golf pro. Even less likely is being mistaken for the clubhouse manager.

- ◆ Real golf course superintendents will always list green as their favorite color. When you're from Wisconsin, red may tie green for first.

- ◆ A real golf course superintendent always considers a "Made in America" tag as an important criterion in purchase decisions.

- ◆ Real golf course superintendents never drive those little pickups made by Nissan or Toyota or Isuzu. They drive either Fords or Chevys (1/2 ton or larger). Occasionally you'll see a real superintendent in a Dodge truck, indicating one of his members owns a Dodge dealership.

- ◆ When it comes to cars, you won't see a real golf course superintendent (from Wisconsin, at least) driving a Saab, Peugeot, Volvo, Audi, Fiat or BMW. He doesn't drive Japanese or Korean cars, either.

- ◆ And speaking of vehicles, real golf course superintendents, at least those from Wisconsin, use real turf trucksters on their golf courses. They wouldn't have those little white imports with the skinny tires and no traction. We don't care how popular they are in California. In fact, that is reason enough NOT to run them!

- ◆ A real golf course superintendent never "does lunch" nor participates in "power lunches". Lunch time was meant for eating. In fact, real superintendents have lunch at mid-morning and eat dinner at noon. The evening meal is called "supper."

- ◆ A real Wisconsin golf course superintendent drinks real beer, not lite beer, not wine and for sure not ice cream drinks. Real cheese is his favorite

- ◆ snack. He drinks milk at every meal and feels unsatisfied if he hasn't had beef for either dinner or supper. Really.

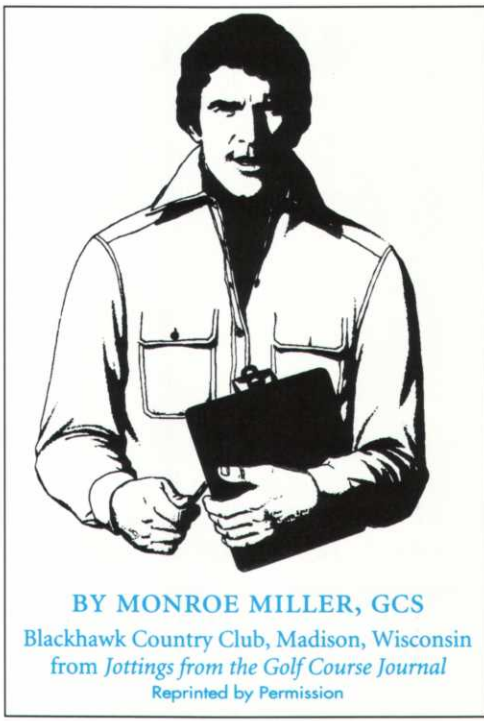
- ◆ A real golf course superintendent decides on how long to run his irrigation system himself and never leaves that duty to a "weather station".

- ◆ A real golf course superintendent decides on the radio stations allowed play time in his shop. No station featuring music by Jeb and the Haystacks is permitted. Neither is one playing tunes by Dougie and the Druggies.

A real superintendent listens to light rock or the music of your life.

- ◆ Real golf course superintendents don't fertilize their lawns more than once a year. They simply do not need the extra work. When mowing is required, each does his own. No riding mowers and no self-propelled mowers allowed.

- ◆ A real golf course superintendent doesn't fib about 1) how much nitrogen



BY MONROE MILLER, GCS
Blackhawk Country Club, Madison, Wisconsin
from *Jottings from the Golf Course Journal*
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A real golf course superintendent doesn't like flowers on his golf course. He'd rather use the time and money spent on pansies and petunias for trees.



he applies on his putting greens each year 2) the stimpmeter readings for his putting greens, 3) the height of cut of his greens and fairways, 4) how much *poa annua* he really has, and 5) his salary. His ego isn't tied to any of the above.

◆ A real golf course superintendent doesn't like flowers on his golf course. He'd rather use the time and money spent on pansies and petunias for trees. They're a real man's plants. Flowers are reserved for clubhouse landscapes.

◆ Given his druthers, a real golf course superintendent would do away with all tee and green equipment — the furniture, the signage, ball washers, rakes, club cleaners, score card boxes, water coolers, etc. "Give them a flag stick to shoot at and let 'em play," says the real golf course superintendent. Many golfers feel the same way.

◆ A real golf course superintendent greatly prefers reel mowers to rotaries.

He understands the difference between cutting and mowing. He likes cutting better. He knows that rotary mowers are hackers to be used only when the ground

isn't suited for reel (real!) cutters. Rotaries finish a distant second to reels.

◆ A real golf course superintendent realizes that *poa annua* is one of the best golf turfs growing; he is perfectly capable of maintaining it in a superb playing condition.

◆ Real golf course superintendents are morning people, and they greatly prefer dawn to sunset. They subscribe to Ben Franklin's creed — early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise. Except for the "wealthy" part.

◆ A real golf course superintendent doesn't jog. After 10-12 hours of work each day on the golf course, he doesn't have to. He likely wouldn't have the energy and absolutely wouldn't be seen in a cute, tight little jogging suit.

Before anyone gets his nose bent out of shape, let me confess I don't meet all the qualifications and criteria of a real golf course superintendent, either. I only own six pairs of blue jeans and proudly maintain flower beds on the golf course.

But make no mistake: this golf course superintendent doesn't wear earrings. ♪

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Trashing the Planet

A book that explains exactly what is and is not happening to the environment

BY TERRY McIVER

MANAGING EDITOR, *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT* MAGAZINE*

Many of our readers are skeptical when it comes to stories about how industry is destroying the environment. Some of the skepticism comes from the fact that they make their livings by caring for the earth. But they also feel a righteous indignation, because they know that the facts are being twisted or not reported.

There is, however, a book that explains exactly what is and is not happening to the environment, and it would make a great gift for special clients: *Trashing the Planet* by Dixy Lee Ray and Lan Guzzo (1990, Regnery Gateway Publishers, Washington, D.C.)

Ray once headed the Atomic Energy Commission, was governor of Washington, and has been associated with the U.S. Bureau of Oceans. She's also taught zoology at the University of Washington. Guzzo is a TV-radio-newspaperman and author.

Trashing the Planet is loaded with factual information refuting every eco-crisis you've come to love over the years:

The greenhouse effect: If the severe winters of 1978, 1982 or 1989 didn't convince you that the earth is not overheating, consider that, according to Ray, the computer models used to predict global warming are too simplistic and contain much guesswork. There also are variables that affect temperature that we can't control: ocean temperature, currents, volcanic eruptions, solar activity.

And while reduction of CO₂ is advisable, the great fluctuations of earth's temperature cast doubt on the belief that man's increased carbon dioxide output is causing global warming.

The ozone layer: As Ray explains, the thickness of the ozone

layer changes periodically. Natural layer fluctuations are about 15 percent, and brief.

"The term 'ozone hole,'" writes Ray, "is misleading since it persists for only a few weeks. The Antarctic ozone 'hole' grew during the early 1980s becoming large in 1985 smaller in 1986

and reaching its greatest size in 1987. In 1988, the 'hole' did not appear as expected. It was finally discovered — only 15 percent as large as predicted and displaced over the ocean."

Ray also reports that penetration of ultraviolet light reaching the earth's surface has been decreasing up to 1.1 percent each year.

Pesticides — The amount of natural pesticides we eat every day is at least 10,000 times the level of pesticide residue from agricultural use of synthetics.

Acid rain — There are many sources: decaying organic matter in swamps and wetlands; volcanoes; lightning. Man-made sources have been reduced by more than 40 percent since the Clean Air Act of 1970.

Other man-made pollutants include volatile organic compounds, ammonia and hydrocarbons. But insects and disease have combined to kill more trees than any man-made source.

Man's stewardship is far from perfect, as Ray admits. But the point of much of *Trashing the Planet* is that change — and taxpayer-funded clean-up programs — must be based on fact, not assumptions, and science must be allowed to play its part in further developments and solutions.

If you've not read *Trashing the Planet* pick up a copy. The science is easy to follow, and it contains common sense we can all understand.

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Loaded with
factual
information
refuting every
eco-crisis you've
come to love
over the years

Cleaning out my desk

Green Side Up



Joel D. Jackson

Joel D. Jackson, CGCS
Editor

The time has come to slip the surly bonds of editorship and seek solace and redemption in my “day job.” You know, the one they call being a golf course superintendent.

What a passage these past four years have been! Bentgrass greens, FGCSA Presidency, double bypass surgery, return to Disney, and oh yeah, through it all, editor of *The Florida Green*. But the times they are a-changing. New job, new golf course, new challenges. It is time for a new editor.

So, I’m giving up the top spot on the masthead. Oh, I’m not jumping ship. I’m just going to slip down below and help out in the galley for awhile. We need someone else to plot the course and steer the ship. Someone who’s been round the horn. Someone who’s seen rough weather. Trying to manage a four-color magazine can be a significant burden for a solo sailor, so the FGCSA Publications Committee is trying to muster a conscientious crew to help the new skipper sail the ship.

Just a few words of thanks to those who made it all worthwhile.

It was really great visiting with the superintendents at the courses I scouted for the cover stories. Thanks for your hospitality and your participation. My sincere

thanks to those precious few superintendents who responded to the *Hands On* program and shared their knowledge in *The Florida Green*.

Also, I appreciate those who took the time to convey their pro and con comments about the magazine directly to me so I could try to stay on track. Especially gratifying were those instances when someone called or wrote seeking permission to reprint something we produced that they found worthy of sharing with their readers or club members.

It has been a privilege to have served as editor. I am looking forward to contributing to the magazine in the future, but in a limited role.

We turned the production of the magazine over to Janlark Communications in 1989 as Dan and Irene Jones opted for a well-deserved retirement from the fray. With Janlark rigging the sails and me hanging on to the helm for dear life through some stormy times, the *Florida Green* has managed to survive and even be recognized a few times in the GCSAA Publications Contest. Thanks, Larry. Thanks, Philip.

Until we meet again, remember, keep the GREEN SIDE UP!