

Fairness —

From the WGCSA *Grass Roots*

BY MIKE SEMLER

There are occasions when I get a sense of being completely helpless. This feeling always seems to come in the middle of the summer during hot and dry spells. It starts with one small occurrence and then steamrolls in an entire series of events that finally culminate in one major ordeal.

The latest ordeal started about two weeks ago when a normally reliable pin setter decided to break the monotony by setting the pin in number 18 green on the top of a mound. The pin placement was clearly an unfair setting for the golfers. But this fine young person decided to put it there anyway.

You can imagine the uproar that followed because of the principles which were broken that morning. My guidelines on pin placement dictate that all locations should be fair for the golfer. This one clearly was not!

A few mornings later, in a matter of minutes after leaving the building, all of the equipment was back in the maintenance facility for needed repairs. Normally, we would have dealt with this in a cool, calm manner. However, this morning was our first shotgun start, and speed was of the essence.

“Unbelievable,” I thought, “how every piece can leave in perfect working order, and return in such a short time for needed repairs.” I must have walked under a stepladder that morning.

The final straw came a few days later on a rainy morning, when I decided it was time to clean out some old files.

Included in this assortment were some past newspaper and magazine articles that I kept because something in them caught my attention and I figured I could use them later. Two of these articles pertained to two new courses that were on the verge of opening to play for the first time. Included in the articles were lengthy comments about the staff additions made to the clubs, namely the golf professional and the clubhouse manager.

The articles gave very pleasant histories of these gentlemen and the positions they had previously held. Overall, they were very well-written articles. Except for one thing. The authors forgot to mention one very key element in these golf course operations — the golf course superintendent! Shame on the authors for forgetting one of the most important people at any golf club.

The two superintendents at these two clubs had every right to be angry because, once again, they were left out of the limelight. Their names did not appear in print, and they received absolutely no recognition for the hard work they had done in the establishment of these golf courses. Most of that work had been completed before the golf pro or clubhouse

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manager were even hired. Nor did the superintendents receive any respect for the future value they would give to their respective memberships.

Those two superintendents were not the only losers when these articles appeared in print. Every golf course superintendent, everywhere, lost a little bit of identity that day. In addition, all the readers who read those articles were losers also. They weren't given the whole story.

The readers were being misled because the assumption in the articles was that the wonderful golf course the golfers were enjoying was there because of some faceless and nameless identity. What a shame the readers did not get to know those two superintendents. They deserved better

than that, and so did the superintendents.

Readers were being misinformed because one very key element in the management of those two clubs was left out. Without the golf course superintendent, most golf clubs would not exist nor survive as they do now. Not many positions in the golf club can say that!

I wish I could go back to that day when the pin location was misplaced on the 18th green and start all over. Maybe things would have turned out differently. My rule to employees on pin placement is to be fair. My rules on recognition and mutual respect are also to be fair. Unfortunately, not everyone plays by my set of rules, and on this morning, I did not feel golf course superintendents were treated fairly.

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