



Before: Hollybrook G&TC No. 5 & No. 6 before Hurricane Irene. Photo by Jim Goins.

We haven't seen the last of the effects of last fall's hurricanes

Remember the Adage: Ugly In, Ugly Out!

Editor's Note: We received these pictures and comments too late for the last issue. They are included in this issue as a stark reminder of the chaos and damage to our golf courses caused by mother nature just six months ago. As we move into the spring season, Bob Klitz reminds us why we may still see some of the long-term financial and cultural effects from the hurricanes of 1999.

BY BOB KLITZ, CGCS

*General Manager
Golf Hollywood at Orangebrook*

Hurricane Irene swept through South Florida in October with strong wind gusts and heavy rain. Structural damage was minimal but flooding and electrical power outages were widespread throughout the south Florida area.

Rental cars were unavailable after the storm due to the number of vehicles damaged by flood waters that rose quickly during the early evening hours. Vehicles that had been parked in front of homes or in driveways were submerged quietly in the night as the heavy rains pounded relentlessly. One area golf course had its entire fleet of cars submerged in water that reached over the seat cushions of the carts.

More than three dozen trees were knocked over on the two 18-hole courses at Orangebrook. The gusty winds contributed to the trees' demise, but the soaking rains are probably what caused the more serious damage by saturating the soil in the root zone. The softened soil and soaked roots were easily dislodged by any significant winds that occurred that evening.

The large ficus trees have been trimmed and propped back up, and the melaleucas, and any other exotics have been removed. Four weeks after the storm, some stump removal still needs to be finished. A very large debris pile is waiting for a tub grinder to reduce the volume of the unsightly debris.

Many golf courses throughout the area were closed due to heavy rainfall. The





After: The same two holes immediately after the hurricane. Photo by Jim Goins.



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This submerged irrigation controller on Hollybrook's No. 4 is a reminder of the not-so-obvious damage and destruction to electrical and mechanical course maintenance systems which have affected course conditioning. Photo by Jim Goins.



...the haunting reminder of Hurricane Irene will return for a visit during spring transition.

Hollybrook's hole No. 11 was inundated with flood waters from Hurricane Irene, as shown by photo far left. Adjacent photo shows the hole before the hurricane. Saturated soils and the spread of weed seeds will have a lingering effect on turf quality until the next full growing season is behind us. Photos by Jim Goins.



two-day rainfall total at Orangebrook was at least 20 inches. October had already been a very wet month and combined with 30 inches of rainfall from June 1999, this has been one rough summer. Construction projects, cultural programs, and weed control programs have all been hampered by this summer's weather.

As we scurry around to cover our problems with winter overseeding, we cringe at the thought of spring transition, remembering the adage: Ugly in, ugly out. The water levels have receded, the winter snowbirds are here, but the haunting reminder of Hurricane Irene will return for a visit during spring transition.

Extensive tree trimming, replanting and removal placed a tremendous strain on course budgets and work priorities. Many 1999 projects were postponed to deal with course cleanup. Photo by Bob Klitz.

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Textron Raving Fans Award

Golf Ventures, Inc., of Lakeland, was honored by Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products with a Raving Fans Award for 1999, Second Place. The Raving Fans Award, which is based on consumer satisfaction surveys, recognizes outstanding achievement and excellence in customer service. The presentation was made at a dealer meeting during the recent Golf Course Superintendents of America Conference and Show in New Orleans. A special guest at the ceremony was golf legend Gary Player, who participated in the presentation.

Pictured from left are Carl Burtner, CEO TTCSP; Michael McLaughlin, Golf Ventures VP operations; Player; Don Delaney, Golf Ventures VP sales; Phil Tralies, president TTCSP



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It's usually better to laugh at a situation than to cry...

A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to the Clubhouse

BY DOUG ABBUHL, GCS

*Seminole Golf Course & Club,
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One of the best stress relievers is laughter. Granted its hard to laugh when you have algae on your greens, a tournament around the corner, or your only greens mower just went to that big shop in the sky.

Being responsible for large areas of highly maintained turfgrass can be very stressful for superintendents. Nature can at times be less than cooperative, and golfers may not always be understanding. That being said, it is very important to keep a sense of humor as you approach each day. For example:

Follow that duck

It is crucial when training new employees to cover all of the important points. While training an employee in the art of walk-mowing greens with straight lines, I mentioned picking out an object and heading toward it. However, I failed to mention that the object should be a stationary one. It seems the person picked out a swimming duck on the lake as his object, and needless to say, the mowing stripes weren't straight that day!

Disappearing pond

Then there was the time my fairway

mower came back to the shop to advise that the pond on our number-six hole was "gone!"

Hmmm, how can a pond disappear? Turns out a sinkhole developed under the half-acres pond and emptied in about five minutes.

That was one the EPA couldn't blame me for the dead fish.

High-flying turtle

How about the world's highest flying turtle? We had a backup pump for our irrigation pond, where water could be pumped from a lower-level lake up to the holding pond. It seems that the suction pipe was damaged at the lower lake and water was backfilling down the stand pipe.

After making the needed repairs and the lake level down eight feet, it was time to turn on the pump and recharge the holding pond. Unaware that a very large turtle had been sucked down the stand pipe, we started the pump.

Water came out of the pipe for about five seconds and then stopped. I rowed over in a boat to take a peek down the stand pipe, when all of a sudden this large turtle shot out of the pipe about 50 feet into the air!

I wasn't injured, but wondered afterwards how the accident report would have read: High speed turtle impacts worker in face!

For every action...

Once an employee was working with a spring-loaded cup cutter that would supposedly cut a cup with the pull of a trigger. It seems he tried it on frozen ground. Not a good idea. He pulled the trigger and the handle hit him in the chin. Ouch!

Not really a morning person

Interviewing potential employees can also be a source of entertainment. Once you put them at ease, you never know what they might tell you. After stressing to the interviewee the importance of an early start to get the course in shape for golfers, this guy looked me right in the eye and said, "You know, I'm really not a morning person." Well, thanks for coming in.

A mind of her own

Then there's the old Buckner satellite controller that has been hit so many time by lightning that it looks like an R2D2 unit in a Star Wars battle. It's hard to get parts for the old girl and she acts possessed.

My irrigation man calls her "Christine," the possessed car in the Stephen King novel, because she jumps through the stations with time on them and stops at the ones zeroed out. Sometimes all the lights come on at once and then go dead. That's one scary controller.

Emergency landing

Last fall, a pilot in a Cessna 172 was close to landing at the nearby airport when he lost power. He couldn't make it to the airport, so he put it down on the driving range. Imagine the look of terror in the ball picker's eyes as he saw the plane heading straight for him.

My assistant called me on the radio, "Doug, we've got a plane on the range." Yeah, right. Just then about 20 vehicles pulled into the parking lot - police, fire, FAA, TV, radio. Talk about a circus.

So like I said, its important to keep a sense of humor because you never what the next day might bring. Ah, the life of a golf course superintendent is never boring.