

# Birdies and Bogeys

## GREEN SIDE UP



Joel Jackson, CGCS

It's time for another round of birdies for those who pull off a good deed and bogeys for those who whiff their chances in our wonderful world of golf.

**Birdie;** no make that an eagle for Jim Nantz of CBS Sports, who admitted to a couple of thousand superintendents that the media has blown the coverage on how important golf maintenance is to the game. He promptly practiced what he preached by talking about the unsung heroes of golf and our national education conference on air at Torrey Pines.

**Bogey** to the ABC team covering the Accenture Match Play

event in La Costa. They showed pictures of the flood which inundated the holes on the course, but the only mention I heard of the crew's efforts was the typical

"the superintendent and his staff did a nice job this week" uttered by Tim Finchem. Meanwhile, one doofus was praising the PGA Tour officials acting as referees for the matches as the nuts and bolts that make this thing happen. Say what?

**Birdies** to the Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association and the Cactus and Pines GCSA in Arizona for getting their golf course owners associations, club managers associations and state golf associations together to work on the issues facing golf. Awesome.

**Bogeys and Double Bogeys** to the golf course owners in Florida who can't even support their own Chapter of the NCGOA. Maybe when the GCSAA and NCGOA get together in Orlando in February 2005 for the new Golf Industry Conference and Show they will get the hint.

**Birdies** to the North Carolina Legislature. It took the Turf Council of North Carolina and their supporters like the Carolinas

GCSA awhile, but they got \$650,000 budgeted to go to the turf-grass center at North Carolina State University annually. If they can respond to a \$2.5 billion dollar turf industry like that, just think what Florida should get at \$4.4 billion.

**Triple bogeys** to the governor of South Carolina. Word is that his state budget proposal cuts out all funding to Clemson University's turf and ornamental programs including extension. Has this guy ever heard of Myrtle Beach? Got to give a bogey to our Florida legislature with their annual budget cuts to IFAS. Agriculture has helped pull Florida through the slow economy, and for that they get sucker punched.

**Birdies** to all certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary courses. Thanks for being proactive and a good example of golf's environmental stewardship, and an eagle to the superintendents paying the ACSP dues out of their own pocket.

**Triple bogey** to the club that won't cough up the \$150 annual dues. I'm embarrassed for you. What is it, one buck per golfer? And bogeys to the rest of the clubs that just don't get it. We're in tough environmental times and this program can help you and the whole

industry. Get on board.

**Birdies** to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). They get it. They know agriculture is the state's most reliable economic performer during good and bad times. They seek scientific answers to issues and don't let rhetoric muddy the picture. Plus they work with all stakeholders on the issues.

**Bogey** to the county health official spreading the story of a baby's death in New England from trace amounts of arsenic in the tap water. Turns out it was homicide and intentional poisoning. Arsenic is a serious issue, but let's deal with facts and not misinformation.

**Birdies** to all of you dedicated guys and gals out there in golf maintenance. Nobody really knows how much you care or how hard you try to give the people what they want.

But I have to throw a bogey on your score card if you aren't also making the case for your value to the club. If you aren't following a business plan or communicating frequently with the movers and shakers then you are risking disqualification.

In the real game of golf there are no mulligans.

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There was Dr. Ken Payne at Michigan State University, Bob Williams at Bob O'Link Golf Club, and Bruce Sering at Glen View Club. All of these fellows were great leaders and I learned much from their leadership styles. It was evident that they had the skills to steer the ship in the right direction.

### 5 Skills of Leaders

#### Communicating

Great leaders communicate their position well. All those around them know where you are coming from. You cannot over-

communicate. Keep all those around you informed.

#### Interviewing

Great leaders surround themselves with great people. They know how to ask the right questions and do the right background work to assemble a successful team.

#### Observing

This area of leadership skills would include being a superb listener. Listen to what the golfers, staff, and industry, etc. has to say. You must not only observe by listening but also by watching. Be visible on your golf course. Find people doing something right and let them know it.

#### Negotiating

Understand how to negotiate win-win situations. Work toward compromise when solving problems. Pick your battles and don't win the battle and lose the war.

#### Sharing Recognition

The final skill is that of sharing rewards and recognition with your peers and staff. Celebrate successes! You wouldn't be successful without those who surround you. Let them know how important a role they play.

Great leaders share the common thread of being able to visualize and create a vision for the future. They communicate that vision to those around them. They

are very capable of making good decisions and giving appropriate directions. They do the right things. They realize that those around them have contributed to their success and recognize them accordingly.

When we think of leaders, it is easy to come up with names of coaches, CEOs, and political leaders. However, we must remember that each and every one of us is a leader in our own right. We lead our own teams (staff). All of the aforementioned skills are important to each and every superintendent. It may be true that these skills don't come easy to all but they will if you work at them!