

Names and numbers for the new guys

By Darren J. Davis

I have always looked at turnover in my assistant superintendent position as a good thing; as long as the individual is advancing his or her career, usually by obtaining a golf course superintendent position. However, one problem we face when bringing new assistants on board is that they must play the “name game” of learning the names of the golf course operations staff. With a predominantly Hispanic crew, that assignment can be a challenge, especially if the individual is not familiar with the Hispanic culture.

To help new assistants learn the names of the crew, we place a picture of each crew member next to their name on the assignment board. I had read about this idea a few years back in a GCSAA online forum, and I was reminded of the tip once again when I visited a former assistant who used the idea at his new golf course.

The dry erase board we already used for daily assignments is magnetic, so all we needed were the pictures of the crew and self adhesive magnetic sheets to attach them to.

The magnetic sheets are available in multiple sizes from most office supply stores and come with a “peel and stick” side which makes attaching the pictures to the magnet a simple task. For the picture, I used my Canon 2.1 megapixel



Simple laminated hole drawings mounted at each satellite makes learning irrigation zones and problem areas easier. The black numbers are the controller station numbers and the red numbers indicate heads with yardage plates on them. Photo by Darren Davis.

camera. I had each crew member stand against a blank wall and I took individual head-and-shoulder photos. I downloaded the files to my computer and formatted them to print on Kodak photo paper, with each photo measuring 2 by 2 inches.

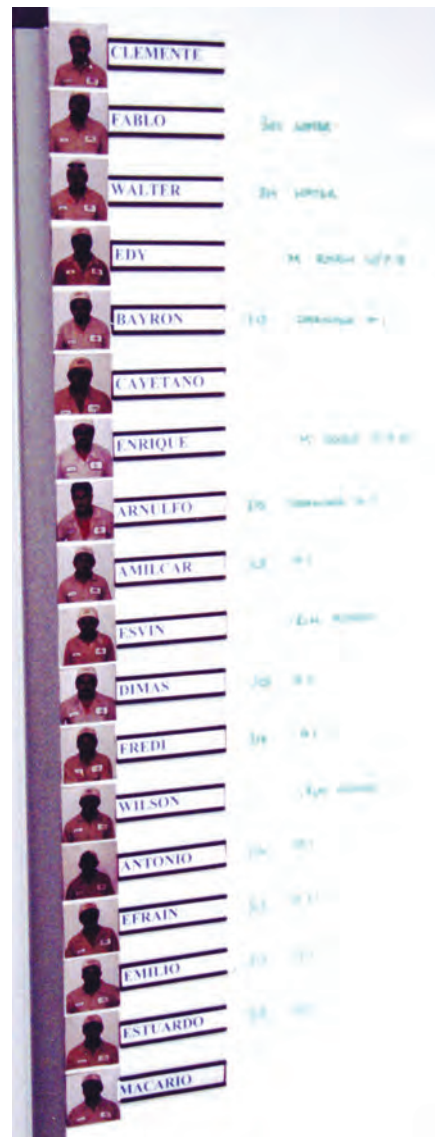
Using our paper cutter, the photos were cut and then affixed to the magnet. The photos were placed next to the employee names on the board. Since I already owned the digital camera and the dry-erase board, all that we needed were the magnetic sheets and two pieces of photo paper. The whole project cost less than \$10 and took no more than half an hour to complete.

After mastering the employee names, the new assistant learns to play the “numbers game” which is learning the station numbers for the more-than-a-thousand irrigation heads on the golf course. As any seasoned golf course manager and/or irrigation technician knows, having a thousand irrigation stations memorized can be a chore, but it is a huge benefit.

To make the process easier for new employees, or an existing employee who may not use the controllers very often, we installed maps on the underside of each lid of the irrigation satellite boxes. As with the employee pictures on the assignment board, this was something that I had either seen or heard about from someone in the industry. In fact, years ago when I originally installed the system I remember speaking with a company that would do the job, but at the time it was cost prohibitive.

The task of preparing the irrigation station maps was a little more time-consuming than the photos on the assignment board. I was fortunate to have copies of “hole sketches” provided by the golf course architect, Rees Jones. Copies of the sketches were made on our copy machine. Then one copy was taken to each controller where the heads were turned on — one by one — and drawn onto the sketch and labeled with the corresponding station number.

Next an employee rode the golf hole and inspected each head. If a yardage plate was installed on the head, the yardage number was added to the map location. When driving the golf course and coming across a trouble area one can look at the yardage plate and quickly match it up to the map at the controller. These field drawings were taken back



2x2-inch photos of crew members next to their names on the assignment board help new assistants and other new employees learn their teammate's names. Photo by Darren Davis.

to the golf course operations facility where a final copy was “beautified” and made legible prior to being laminated by the office manager.

Velcro tape was used to affix the laminated drawings to the irrigation satellite lid. The roll of 2-inch-wide tape was purchased at an office supply store and cut into 2-in. by 2-in. pieces. One piece of the peel-and-stick Velcro was affixed to the controller lid and the other piece was stuck on the back of the map, making removal and re-attachment easy. We already had a copy machine, a laminating machine and colored markers. The only cost, other than labor, was for a few pieces of white copy paper and a roll of the Velcro tape. This project also cost less than \$10.