

The year 2004 produced some memorable moments in sports.

The biggest was the amazing run of the Boston Red Sox, who won eight straight games to win the World Series. And how appropriate that their final victory came on the evening of a lunar eclipse. Or that's what the astronomers told us happened. I believe that in actual fact the moon disappearing was the "Bambino" looking down from on high and with a big wink said "OK, I forgive them after 86 years." The Yaz couldn't do it, Fred Lynne couldn't do it, the grounder through Bill Buckner's legs kept them from doing it, but finally the curse is over.

AS IT LIES



Jim Walker

Snuffed out by gutsy pitching, long balls and Irish Luck. The Bosox are World Champs.

How about Vijay Singh? Ten tournaments, and almost \$11 million. That's one dollar for every practice ball he hit in the last twelve months. Then there's the Tiger who slipped from number 1 to number 3.

Year Under Review

Mild distractions like a new 155-foot, \$57 million yacht, a Caribbean wedding which attracted a Who's Who from across the globe, and the Swedish beauty herself. I'm glad to see him squeezing something beside a Golf Pride grip. About time he stopped to smell the roses, the sweet fruit of his labor, to become a complete person and not just a golf machine.

And then there's his Orlando neighbor, Annika Sorenstam. Ten wins worldwide and over \$2.5 million and already a member of the Hall of Fame, I don't know how she keeps herself up mentally for the most mentally challenging game in the world. Maybe, if they have her at the Skins game again next year, they will let her hit from the tees

about 40 yards up from the guys. Having her hit from the same tees as the men is like going bear hunting with a stick.

Philly Mick ended his own curse with a Masters win. Now he is not the best player in the world without a Major victory. And how about Phil's final round in the Grand Slam of Golf: just missing a nine-footer on the 18th for 58? He joins the 59 club. He did this after taking two weeks off before the event and announced after his triumph that he was going to take the next three weeks off. Must be nice! Wouldn't you love to take a few weeks off after successfully overseeding your greens or completing a renovation project? Gee, them Tour pros got it tough.

How about those 2 and 9 (at this point) Dolphins? Who would have thunk it. At least their horrible season saw the departure of Dave Wrongstadt. The team needs a complete overhaul: new offensive line, new receivers, new quarterback, new running back (<ITAL>machts nichts</ITAL> on No. 34), a new front office and let's get Jerry Glanville out of retirement to coach. Miami needs a House of Pain and you gotta love a guy who always left two tickets at will call for Elvis.

I think the Gators made a big mistake

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dumping Ron Zook. I don't see anyone out there to replace him who could do a better job. Since "Spurs" turned them down, perhaps the school will see the error of their ways and rehire him.

The poor Hurricanes almost pulled it off despite losing seven first-round picks from last year and 12 injuries to key personnel on both sides of the ball. The next two

years could spell real trouble to the other top teams if the 'Canes can stay healthy and out of jail.

I guess I now have to say something about Florida State: I don't like Bobby Bowden. I've never liked him and am quite sure I never will!! Sorry Jeb because Tallahassee is such a pretty town. All those live oaks, Spanish moss, and chiggers.

Then there's the rest of the

state teams who also need help: Marlins, Devil Rays, Bucs, Jags. We'll say a little prayer for you, which won't help because you all need BIG TIME HELP. Let's turn up the Heat. Can they make the playoffs with an attack of the Shaq? They just lost a game to the Pistons who have two starters on suspension.

Lets close on a real high note. Ron Artest climbing into the

box seats to pummel a fan who may or may not have thrown a cup of liquid refreshment – a real class act. Six or seven others also received suspensions, including Reggie Miller who received a one-game suspension for wiping up the floor after the melee.

Wishing you all a Happy and Healthy 2005, let's hope it's not the same old jive.

While many of you were throwing down overseed to end a rough, hurricane-infested summer and sow hope for a better fall, and while sports teams were setting new all-time lows for sportsmanship in basketball and football, I was quietly becoming eligible for early Social Security at the ripe old age of 62. On the up side I may soon be able to shoot my age in golf, at least I'll keep trying and I hope you will too.

All of us pass many milestones on the road of life, and let's be truthful, some of them can be stumbling blocks and obstacles that make us lose sight of the big picture. But most of our milestones are ceremonial, like attaining a certain age that bestows privileges like a having a driver's

license, the right to vote, consuming a cold beer legally and alas finally drawing Social Security.

Other milestones might include graduating from college, getting married, having and raising kids, surviving a serious accident or health problem and being successful in your work.

Many of these events are life defining, and the wrinkles and gray hairs earned here are more about character and responsibility than achievements earned by the mere passage of time.

Passing milestones can be like running a marathon. Sometimes you hit the wall and other times you slip into that elusive "zone" and things go smoothly. No matter where you are in the race; things can change on a dime and there are no guarantees. Well there is one; I guarantee only you can control how you react to the changes that will invariably come to you along the road of life.

In our sometimes-volatile business, superintendents find themselves holding pink slips on Friday or upon return from vacation or a conference trip and wondering, "What the heck happened?" The course never looked sharper, the crew is happy, the members seemed to be happy, the budget is in line with projections — what is the problem? The problem is that people in charge are only human and they can screw up a good thing for no apparent reason. It could be personal. It could be business. It could be political. It doesn't really matter in the end. You may or may not get justice for some bonehead decision. Life is not always

fair; it just goes on. And so must you.

I ride the roller coaster with all of you. It tickles me to hear of a superintendent celebrating his 10th, 20th, 30th year at a club. It saddens me to hear about folks with the same tenures being let go, and we never seem to know exactly why. But we have lingered long enough at the termination milestone. Too many have passed it, but thankfully most have survived and found out there is life after being fired, so you've got that going for you.

At age 40 you can start your second childhood. When you turn 50, AARP sends you an invitation to join and start getting those automatic "senior citizen" discounts. And at my age 62 you can start drawing early retirement with reduced benefits. One of my friends says he has signed up, and he has to live to 84 before contemporaries who wait till they are eligible for full retirement catch up to him; for my age group that's almost age 66. That's one of those milestones I'm trying to figure out how to handle intelligently.

Meanwhile, I'm happy doing what I do and I hope you are too. If not, then you really should be looking inward to find out what you would like to do and start moving in that direction. It makes no sense to wander aimlessly down the road of life with your shoulder to the grindstone and miss out on all the wondrous sights along the way.

The good and bad milestones on your life's journey will come automatically with or without your help. They say you only go 'round once in life, but if you do it right, once is enough. I'll drink to that.

Late breaking news....

Just when Floridians are putting their lives and property back together from four hurricanes, along comes the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunamis that have killed more than 120,000 people (as of Dec. 31). The total devastation to the homes and infrastructure and overwhelming loss of life are almost incomprehensible.

The disruption and destruction to Floridian's lives and property is no less real, but the magnitude of the Asian Rim disaster must have us counting our blessings in retrospect. People still need help and support here at home, and so do the devastated citizens in the Far East.

The forces of nature have a way of reminding us how fragile mankind can be in the world around us. Against the backdrop of this awful natural catastrophe and its far reaching consequences, the killings and loss of life for political reasons in the mideast and else where only proves how arrogant and shallow some humans can be.

Let us resolve to live better lives in the coming year and give thanks for our blessings every day.

Handling Those Milestones

GREEN SIDE UP



Joel Jackson, CGCS