

# The Role of the Second Assistant

By Joel Jackson, CGCS

Perhaps the title of this issue's Hands On topic may have seemed a bit limiting since many courses don't have second Assistants and, in many instances, may not even have one assistant. But every course has a number-one or number-two "go-to" guy or gal whom the superintendent turns to run the show when he or she is away on a business trip or a much-needed vacation.

Sometimes it's someone to be in charge while the superintendent is in a club meeting, or someone to lead a small project crew or to be the follow-up person during the morning preparations and set up of the golf course.

When there are first and second assistants, they often serve double-duty as crew leaders and supervisors in addition to performing pest-control and irrigation-technician duties. In less common cases, some equipment managers serve as "assistants" to oversee the crew when the superintendent is gone.

During my days at Walt Disney World, we didn't have anyone with the title of assistant superintendent, but we did have a position called a "lead groundskeeper." Over time, besides leading several crew members in the usual multi-person activities like routine bunker- or cart-path-edging assignments or perhaps a seasonal greens renovation or sod project, they also began making out daily schedules for the routine jobs.

The pest control and irrigation technician's work was coordinated and assigned by the superintendents directly.

You often hear people say that the crew is the most important asset of the maintenance department, and it's true. It doesn't matter how big the budget or elaborate the facility. You can build the biggest and best golf course in the world, but it takes people to make it work. A few of your fellow superin-

tendents chipped in to share the duties and responsibilities of their second assistants.

## JOHN'S ISLAND CLUB

John's Island Club has only one second assistant superintendent on our three courses and that individual is stationed at our West Course. The need arose when our practice facilities were expanded and staffing levels were raised.

The second assistant is in charge of the practice areas. We have a four-acre short-game facility that consists of three greens and eight bunkers, a driving range with a video building and two practice greens. The short-game greens, bunkers, fairway, roughs and divots must all be ready for open-

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ing before the golfers arrive. The driving range must be mowed and the bunkers must be raked. The job needs the same detail as we put on the golf course, since many players just go to the West course to use the practice facilities and we must have the employees to respond to the needs.

During the summer months the second assistant is put in charge of the special projects. This gives the individual the opportunity to show more initiative to plan the day for a group of employees and then supervise the work and be responsible for the results. Through this leadership they have been able to manage people of different abilities and to prioritize the steps involved in the project.

The goal is to allow the second assistant a chance to grow into the role of a first assistant superintendent in two years. We have been very successful in the training process and the proof is that, as I write this, we are currently without a second assistant since he was hired at another club as the first assistant.

*Greg Pheneger, GCS*

## HOBE SOUND GC

Mike Kindrew is our second assistant. His responsibilities include making the fertilizer applications to the greens and performing most of the agronomic and cultural practices to the putting surfaces. He also is in charge of monitoring and operating the clubhouse and common area irrigation systems. Mike also has strong carpenter skills and spearheads most of our projects involving general building construction. This week Mike Francisco, my first assistant, is on vacation and Mike steps in and assumes his duties, which gives him chance to take on more responsibility of the total operation.

*Roy Mac Donald, GCS*

## GREY OAKS GC

We don't have a position called second Assistant. Our third person in charge has the title of crew leader.

Normally this person doesn't have any academic turf management education, but this individual has a considerable amount of practical experience, around three to five years at our course. They are able to accomplish all job tasks and train others to perform these tasks. We prefer this person to be bilingual.

The crew leader can come in on weekends and get the crew started and are able to recognize irrigation needs and run the irrigation system if necessary.

This person needs to be a self starter and motivator and someone that the staff will look up to and respect. This person needs to be able to communicate with the entire staff.

*Rick Tatum, GCS*



*By cutting the ferrule off the bottom of a flagstick, photographers can easily move the pin wherever they want on a green. Photo by Darren Davis.*

# Place an Instant Flag!

*By Darren J. Davis*

Like many Super Tips, I stumbled upon the following idea while visiting one of my peers, Kyle Sweet at the Sanctuary Golf Club on Sanibel Island.

I wanted to take photographs of the golf course to accompany an article I was writing. Since Sweet was nearing the end of a complete golf course renovation, and the club was closed, I had a problem – there were no pins set in the greens!

I knew the challenge of finding photogenic pin locations and up until now I hadn't developed a solution other than to set a pin myself, or have an employee perform the task.

Fortunately, on this particular day Sweet came to the rescue.

After explaining my predicament he said, "No worries, I can take care of that." I knew he was a nice guy, but I was a little surprised at how calm Sweet appeared with my nuisance problem.

When he returned, he brought with him what appeared to be a regulation flagstick with an embroidered Sanctuary logo flag attached. However, he didn't have any of the necessary tools to set the pin. Sweet had taken a saw and cut the ferrule off the bottom of the flagstick so I could simply insert it into any green, wherever I wanted.

The tip worked beautifully and from a distance you couldn't tell there was no cup set in the green.

When I finished the shoot and reconnected with Sweet to thank him, I complimented him on his resourcefulness. Sweet quickly admitted that, like me, he gained a lot of knowledge from visiting his peers and he would have to give credit where credit was due.

He said, "One day I was visiting my good friend Bob Wagner at Coral Creek Club in Placida, and while touring the golf course, Bob mentioned that the (Tom) Fazio group had been doing a lot of photo shoots on his golf course. Bob added that one of the photographers was very particular and continually wanted the flags moved to different locations on the greens. So after moving the pin several times with a cup-cutter, Bob realized there had to be an easier way to do this... which is when he thought of cutting off the ferrule."

Sweet said that Wagner had also taken a double-sided logo flag and installed a thin piece of wire in the interior of the flag. The idea was to bend or curl the wire so if there was no breeze, the flag could be manually positioned to see the logo. Or, if it was a windy day, the wire could be used to keep the flag fixed in one location.

Sweet remarked, "In the past I had been faced with the same predicament as Bob, and although this idea was so simple, it was one of those things that I had never thought of." He added, "I certainly can't take the credit for it, but I sure have used the tip!" Sweet said that he has used Wagner's innovation when taking personal pictures and when taking photographs for the club newsletter. ■



*Did you ever hard-wire a flag? A thin wire can help position the logo for a photo. Photo by Darren Davis.*



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