

# 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*