

show. After the wedding, I was not his son-in-law, but his oldest son. I said, he finally got a son who can play golf. Sorry, Jack, (my brother-in-law). Jack suffers from LOFT (Lack of @#\$\$%ing Talent) Disease when he plays.

Skull's daughter doesn't suffer from LOFT on the golf course. She and her dad used to skin the winter snowbirds visiting Doral on a regular basis. Hey Harold "wanna play a little game?"

"Yea, OK, but my daughter gets to hit from the red tees."

"OK, sure, she's a girl."

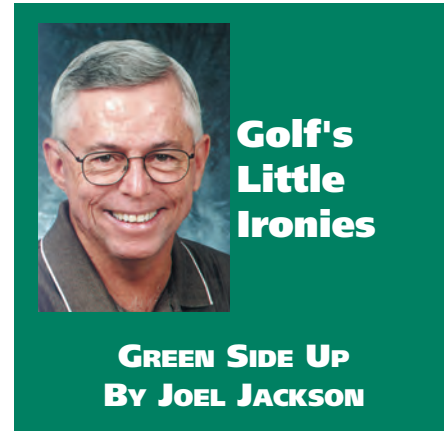
So Susi gets up on the first tee and takes it deep, right down the old whazoo. A little smile curls in the left corner of Harold's lip. One snowbird says to the other, "Holy crap, did you see where she hit that ball?" They knew then it was going to be a long, expensive day.

Signing off now with, "Skull, this is Miami tower, over." God, my dear friend, I miss you so much. Are the greens in heaven really as fast as they say?"

## There Were Gators in the Pond at Oakmont, But One Duck Could Fly

In my best Robin Williams impersonation, "Gooooood morning golf nation! Who looks like a duck, walks like a duck and sounds like a duck? U. S. Open Champion Angel Cabrera, that's who."

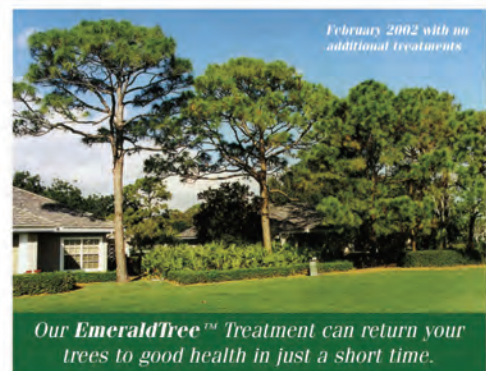
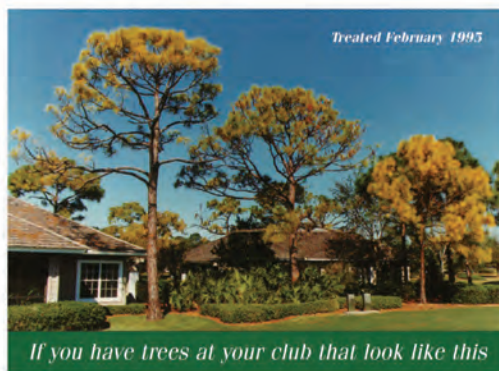
The USGA and NBC missed a big opportunity to play the caddie card and link the loveable teddy bear, I mean rubber ducky, Cabrera to the legendary Francis Ouimet, another caddie who once upon a time slew the goliaths of the game and became a U. S. Open Champion. All Bob Costas could talk about was the Argentine connection to the "big stupid" moment of Roberto DeVincenzo when he muffed the Masters victory within his grasp. Costas



only mentioned it two or three times on the air, and it was also in this morning's paper as well.

As they fold the tents on the "dangerous" golf course (Phil Mickelson's diagnosis), the Oakmonster members can get back to their sadomasochistic game of gotcha golf. Which leads me to the puzzling tidbit of information I gleaned from the Golf Channel interview with course

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## AFTERWORDS

superintendent John Zimmers, Jr.

As Rich Lerner was interviewing Zimmers and talking about the historically fast and intimidating greens – often kept at 15 on the stimp meter – it was revealed that the greens were push-up, clay-based greens that had never been rebuilt! Whoa! Hold the horses.

This goes against everything we were ever taught and what we are told must transpire to have greens that can withstand increasingly outlandish golfer expectations.

Obviously there must be some missing information that the quick sound bite didn't cover. I mean, aren't we supposed to build greens according to USGA specifications calling for extensive laboratory testing of particle size conformity, percolation rates, pore space, organic content, drainage, etc, etc?

The fact that the USGA has held a record eight U. S. Open Championships

at Oakmont only adds to my confusion. The Green Section just went on DEFCON 3.

Zimmers did offer up one mystical explanation involving the evolution of a mysterious strain of *Poa annua* bluegrass that grows or survives only on the property. Transplants to other locales wither and die. It grows only at Oakmont. Put the turf breeders on the case. Will Penn State, home of legendary grasses, please weigh in on that one?

Of course the other obvious ironies of the week included the contrast of the affable corpulent cigarette puffing Cabrera matching wits and whacks from the jungle formerly known as the rough with the buff, hard-body Woods who has a strict workout regimen and steely determined game face demeanor. I'm not criticizing Woods, actually I was pulling for him to win, despite picking Furyk in my Pick Your Pro contest. I think

Tiger will break Jack's major records, it was just ironic that that the mook outperformed the machine when it counted on this day.

In many ways the common man's victory was a nice reminder that good people, humble people, average work-a-day people can and do succeed in this high-tech, high-profile, politically correct world that we live in.

It was also a reminder to me that golf course superintendents who work hard to make ends meet with budgets that are squeezed ever tighter can find success. They are people, like Cabrera, who manage their drought-stricken or storm-ridden courses calmly in pressure-cooker situations with humor and determination and a love for the moment and for what they do.

It isn't easy being a duck in pond full of alligators, but ducks can fly while gators crawl (and tigers prowls).



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