

Robinson. The area's primary labor pool consisted of former fishermen and oystermen but, once they understood the mission and learned their roles and responsibilities, Bass says they have become a topnotch, dependable team.

Bass is part of the new generation of young superintendents. They grew up with environmental issues as part of their education and routine content in the news. Bass says he does not find managing golf turf within the Audubon program any more time-consuming than any other maintenance program he was involved in while learning the business.

Bass praises his mentors Steve Hill, Geri Buchheit, CGCS, and Floyd Robinson. From them he received encouragement and training in the business from the pro shop operations under Hill at Royal Oak CC in Titusville to golf course maintenance from Robinson and Buchheit at Killlearn CC in Tallahassee. Bass said, "Floyd and Geri were great teachers. They came from two different generations of superintendents so I got a lot of practical turf management history and changes from them. Geri's active involvement in environmental stewardship, the Audubon program and working with the Leon County Extension Office with their Master Wildlife Conservation Program made a lasting impression on me."

Bass said, "The truth is we use fewer chemicals now and the course is in great shape. The only times I use a boom is to foliar feed the greens and treat greens for armyworms, which are our biggest nuisance up here. I do apply some pre-emergent herbicides for *Poa annua* control in the cool season. We spot-treat all weeds with 2.5-gallon sprayers. I have trained three guys to identify and treat weeds. It takes them maybe three days total to do the whole course. We spend less on chemicals and labor doing it this way, and we certainly don't

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The 9th hole. Play it safe or challenge the lake on the long par 4. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.



On the 5th tee, native muhlygrass's lavender inflorescence on display. No. 8 green is in the background. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

overspray in this sensitive environment.”

This selective, curative approach seemed to be working as the course was 99 percent weed-free on my tour around the links, and Bass was hard-pressed to identify any really tough turf management challenges at the course. After nudging him further, he did acknowledge that armyworms were the worst in the Panhandle than any other place he'd been from Tallahassee to Naples.

He said, “People told me that armyworms can be a problem with new turf and grow-in and they were right. But I still take a cautious approach and monitor the damage until the extent of the infestation is known. Mr. Clark concurs with a threshold-level approach to minimize pesticide use. When I treat I generally rotate Talstar and low rates of Orthene. I tried Di-Pel, but it took a little too long and the damage became unacceptable.”

Bass also said, “I do have some torpedo-grass problems that were self-inflicted. Fill dirt excavated around one of the original lakes on site had some torpedo-grass infestation and the dirt got used on the course before we had a chance to fumigate it. However, we keep an eye on known spots and make several applications of Drive during grow-

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The par-5, 15th hole doglegs around a wetland from tee to green. The wetlands are hand-pruned at least twice a year. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.

ing season, which has been keeping it in check.”

Overall Bass maintains he is blessed with a great sandy site that drains well. Among

other things this was once forestland harvested for paper production. Most of it is sandy and well drained. Bass says only two or three holes at the

lower end of the property have heavier soils that require close moisture management. He says there are at least three micro-environments on the site

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Fun Facts



Bryce Bass – Future Superintendent? Photo by Shane Bass

Here are some things you may not know about our cover story superintendent

Car: Ford F-150

The last good movie I saw: Finding Nemo

I stay home to watch: FSU Sports
The book I've been reading: The Going to Bed Book by Sandra Boynton
Favorite meal: Rock shrimp and corn fritters (Dixie Crossroads, Titusville)
Favorite performers: Jimmy Buffet
Prized possessions: My family
Personal Heroes: My parents
Nobody knows that I: Would rather be surfing
I'm better than anyone else when it comes to: Fishing (That's for TC & BJ)
I'd give anything to meet: Flip Pallet
My fantasy is: To work on a golf course that doesn't allow carts
The one thing I can't stand: People who are lazy or liars
If I could change one thing about myself: I would learn to count to 10 before I speak
My most irrational act: Anytime I don't count to 10 before speaking
My most humbling experience: My son being born
The words that best describe me: Loyal, passionate and dependable.



Florida Green Cover Photographer Daniel Zelazek shown here in his pre-dawn set up at St. James Bay, which resulted in this issue's cover picture. Photo by Shane Bass.

water quality, his wells are also used to measure the water table levels and he reports these depths twice monthly to the Northwest Water Management District. It wasn't a formal requirement, but he wanted to stay ahead of the curve and demonstrate a proactive approach to working with regulators.

The irrigation system has 711 heads, mostly part circle, which were strategically located so that irrigation water would not carry into the wetlands and uplands, and the 15 lakes are interconnected so that the surface water at the low end of the property can be pumped back up the line and be recirculated allowing more filtering of the water before it leaves the property. There are no deep wells for recharging the irrigation lake.

By providing 85 acres of open turf area in the densely wooded area, the golf course has created lots of "edge habitat" which helps to increase biodiversity in the area. Bass says wildlife ranges from deer, bobcat, coyotes, foxes and an occasional bear to rabbits, squirrels and many species of birds. I saw a couple of hawks, an osprey and hundreds of perching birds on the course, including an eastern bluebird.

As man and nature learn to co-exist on amicable terms, Bass is working on a solution to a unique problem. He said, "Of course we love the wildlife; it's part of what this is all about. But right now I am stumped trying to find a way to keep the young coyote cubs from chewing (teething) on our bunker rake handles."

In a part of Florida where time moves just a little slower and rapid development even slower, St. James Bay has preserved small pieces of man's history on the land, and even larger expanses of the native land itself. It's a guarantee that this part of Florida's coast will not be forgotten at all.



Maintenance friendly – this fairway bunker on the first hole is one of only 13 with extensive fingering out of the total of 60 bunkers on the course. Photo by Joel Jackson.

requiring different irrigation and nutrient management approaches to maintain good healthy turf and not waste resources.

The numerous preserved wetland areas are pruned back at least twice a year by hand to keep sight lines open and shot-making over them possible. The series of marshes and lakes provides the surface water used for irrigation, although an agreement is in place for the course to take effluent

as needed from the nearby town of Carrabelle in the very near future. Taking advantage of the filtering effect of properly managed turfgrass will provide efficient disposal of the town's effluent and Bass reports that the water quality sampling in his monitoring wells required under the Audubon Sanctuary program has shown a decline in background nitrate levels already as the turf has matured.

Bass says that besides monitoring

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Congratulations to Shane Bass, CGCS, and his club for being selected
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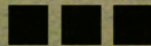
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What We Have Here is a Need to Communicate

By Bruce R. Williams, CGCS

Golf course superintendents do a wonderful job of providing great golfing conditions. Some have learned the trade through formal education and others have learned through hard work and good mentors. At some point we all acquire the skills to keep the turfgrass looking super within the constraints of our budgets and weather conditions. However, there is one area that I believe to have a wide variance in competencies and that is our ability to communicate.



Bruce Williams, CGCS, MG

I have a couple of theories on communication and how it can affect superintendents. By sharing them in this article, I am not expecting everyone to agree with me but it may start a few people thinking about the value of communication.

- More people lose their jobs over poor communication than poor turfgrass conditions.
- Many superintendents miss opportunities to shine by not telling their stories.
- Writing, speaking, providing reports, etc. are not natural talents but skills that must be acquired. They take practice and effort.

Let's look at a few things that you might be able to put into practical application at your golf course.

I hope you have some vehicle to convey your message to your golfers. Standard vehicles would be a golf course newsletter, a Web site, bulletin boards in the pro shop, locker room, etc. Every month I receive about 100 newsletters from clubs all

across the country via our GM. Only 20 percent have monthly articles from the superintendent, yet all of them have monthly articles from the pro and GM.

The same is true with Web sites. Some superintendents have done a marvelous job of contributing to their golf course Web sites but again the golf pros and managers outshine us in this category. It is easy to say that you don't have time to write a monthly message but I would say that you can't afford not to take the time to communicate clearly the great and exciting things that are happening on the golf course.

I can't tell you how many times I have had peers tell me the Rodney Dangerfield line "I don't get no respect." Perhaps it is because we don't do a great job of developing our own public relations campaigns. It has been said that the three key steps to promoting your success are:

1. Do the right thing.
2. Do the right thing.
3. Tell people that you are doing the right thing!

To be successful and receive the respect you are due, you must recognize opportunities and take advantage of them. When you get a chance to attend board meetings, committee meetings, golf advisory meetings, etc. welcome the opportunity. Prepare well for these meetings and be certain to present your message professionally either verbally or in print. Too many people shy away from these opportunities. When you are invited to the Guest Day banquet, don't turn the chance down. Sure, you got up at 4 a.m., but you owe it to yourself and your crew to rub elbows with the players and receive the accolades for the great golf course.

When problems arise on the golf course, don't allow someone else to tell your story. I never want to depend on a waiter, bartender, golf shop employee, etc. to explain why we have some thin

areas on the golf course. The message is sure to get mixed up and perhaps put you in a bad light. Be accessible when problems exist. People typically want to know three things when trouble happens on the golf course.

1. What happened?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. When will it be back to normal?

Nobody can carry the message better than you. Communicate it every way you can until the problem is resolved.

A picture is worth a thousand words. Use pictures as a vehicle to communicate your successes or to demonstrate areas that need improvement. In this era we should all learn to utilize digital photography and power point to make powerful presentations to promote programs and projects. It is a tool that can make us all look pretty good in front of our employers.

While space does not allow me expand on the subject, suffice it to say that the largest area for communication improvement is the skill of listening. If you go to the library you will find hundreds of books on public speaking. However, I doubt if you can find any that deal with listening. Listen to what your golfers want. This can be done through customer evaluations or personal feedback. Don't hear what you want to hear but try to understand what people are really saying. Don't be defensive. Learn to accept constructive criticism. Employers want people that bring them solutions rather than someone who gives excuses.

Think about the top five superintendents you know. What puts them in this special category of high esteem? Is it their ability to grow grass or is it their ability to communicate? I feel strongly that today the grass growing is the fundamental part of the job but the ability to communicate is paramount to career success.



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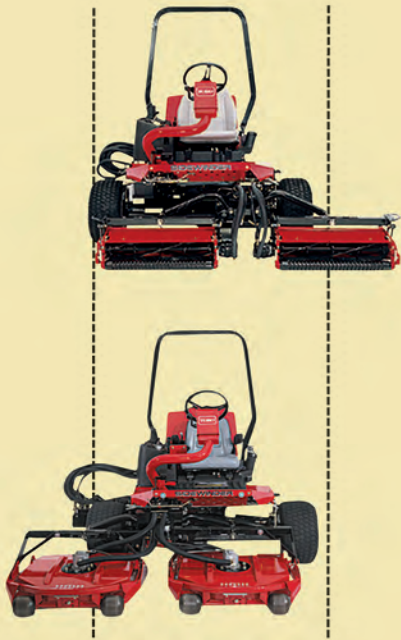


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