

# Illinois superintendent steps behind the camera

*Jerry Mach develops third film on golf course maintenance*

By Mark Leslie

Move over Steven Spielberg and Oliver Stone. Jerry Mach is here to stay.

Mach, superintendent at Lake Bluff (Ill.) Golf Club, has two videos to his credit and has shot all the scenes for a sequel to his "career" premier, "Introduction to Golf Course Maintenance."

But, unlike Spielberg and the Hollywood crowd, Mach is not in the business of videos to make money. He has barely broken even.

Indeed, his aim is to provide basic instruction in areas directly affecting his colleagues around the country. With "Introduction to Golf Course Maintenance," he created a 28-minute primer for groundskeepers.

In his new release, the 12-minute "Unwritten Rules of Golf," Mach tackled golf etiquette, from replacing divots to pointers in speeding up play.

Both videos approach their subjects "in a generic fashion," Mach said, because many superintendents have their own ways to train new employees and because clubs in different areas may differ in policies on divot replacement, golf cart use, and other rules of golf.

Mach's peers first prodded him to film the maintenance video. They asked that it be

produced in Spanish, as well as English, since Spanish-speaking people are hired at 85 percent of the Chicago area golf courses, and at many in California, Florida and other states.

"I had lost six people in a short time and just wanted a vehicle to get people going, to get them acquainted with the basics of what is involved," Mach said. "We took a generic approach, since a lot of superintendents have their own way to train people."

The film shows where to take grass clippings, how to rake sand traps and change cups — the simple chores.

Mach sold 140 copies of "Maintenance" in 26 states, Japan, Mexico and Germany. And while some superintendents thought the film was not specific enough, it had its fans.

Ken Lapp of Cog Hill Golf and Country Club said: "We have four courses and 60 employees. This is a great training aid... I really enjoyed it."

Stonebridge Country Club superintendent Roger Stewart added it is a "good basic training tape, (doing a) good job of explaining jobs, especially cart maintenance."

A cry went out for a sequel. Mach has shot 24 scenes for "Golf Course Maintenance II," but may not proceed with it because of cost and since course policies often vary widely concerning such things as grass types and mowing practices.

But, "Unwritten Rules of Golf" is complete and, in fact, started playing in the Lake Bluff



Superintendent Jerry Mach demonstrates a turf management tip similar to those in his videos

clubhouse last October until the course closed for the winter.

"Unwritten Rules" was prompted by the greatly increased number of rounds played at Lake Bluff GC, where Mach has replaced all his fairways with bentgrass since 1985.

"That attracted a lot of people. And that prompted this tape," he said. "We started getting a lot of new faces, more teams, more juniors. We're always stressing to replace divots, etc. But, after 375 rounds on a Saturday, on Monday you check the course and you want to cry."

"Plus, we were not keeping up with the increased play."

Mach recruited 14-year-old son Noah and assistant pro Jay Hoffman to star in the production, and local video store owner Lou Mercerie to film it.

And, voila! A film that follows Noah and Jay through a round of golf, addressing among

other topics:

- replacing divots and repairing ball marks;
- raking sand traps and placing the rakes in the traps;
- use of carts; and
- scoring.

Mach remained "generic" as much as possible. Realizing that some clubs do not allow carts off the paths, in one scene Hoffman said: "The superintendent wants us to keep carts in the rough today."

"I didn't elaborate because some courses don't allow carts on fairways at all," Mach said.

Also, at Lake Bluff, Mach has soil-and-seed mixes in buckets on tees, especially par 3s, where irons are used. But Southern courses with Bermudagrass don't want golfers to return divots.

The video, Mach said, is "a tool to combat our problem and make golfers a part of the solution."

"These people watch the pros on TV. And how many times do you see the pro replacing his divot? You don't usually even see his caddy fix it. And you don't see them rake traps or fix their ball marks. A lot of these golfers don't even know that's what they're supposed to do. This tape is made for them."

Noting that many clubs have different rules of etiquette, Mach suggested, "If people don't think it's appropriate to their club, get the sampler. Use this tape as a template and make their own tape."

As for himself, Mach knows how he will gauge the effectiveness of his second endeavor in the world of filmmaking.

"If I go on a green and see 50 ball marks where I usually see 75, I'm going to be happy. I'll know it works."

People may order the films from Mach IV Productions, P.O. Box 543, Wauconda, Ill. 60084. "Unwritten Rules" costs \$19.95, plus \$4 for shipping and handling. The English and Spanish versions of "Maintenance" cost \$49.95 each, plus shipping, or \$100 for both with free shipping.

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