

Superintendent tells tales of consultants causing firings

Use of agronomic consultants was the center of a controversy during one panel session at the Canadian Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show.

Superintendent Randy Scott of Blainville, Quebec, said his first concern is consultants and contract maintenance, adding, "I've seen consultants take maintenance jobs at four golf courses."

He had always thought groundskeeping was "part of a fraternity." But, in three of those four cases, the consultant hired the fired superintendent — at a lower wage, he said.

"The consultant borrowed equipment

from the four golf courses. You never knew who was using the equipment or paying for the repairs," Svcott said. "The superintendent/consultant is usually working to get jobs for himself."

Although Scott recommended a club spend money to further its superintendent's education rather than hire a consultant, others on his panel said Scott's specific cases are rare.

Teri Yamada, who administers the Royal Canadian Golf Association Green Section, said: "There are instances I've been called in and quickly got the feeling I'm the hired gun [to get the superintendent fired]. You do a

walkabout of the course, give the board of directors an agronomy lesson, explain the problem and why the superintendent's been requesting an irrigation system the last X number of years... Most superintendents use consultants and get confirmation they are right [about course conditions]."

Jim Wyllie, a past president of the Canadian GSA and now an agronomy consultant, said although the word 'consultant' is "most hated and feared ... I use consultants personally — for drainage, seeds and other expertise."

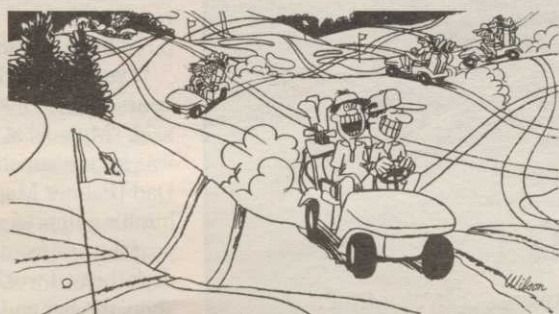
The consultant's role, he told superintendents, "is to work with you and



make things work for you. Let him take the heat for you."

"The animosity that precedes me is far and away [worth] the rewards of the final results of working together," Wyllie said.

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