

# Humor, embarrassment a potent combination, Moore relates

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try to find a little humor in every situation. Nothing makes a bad day a little more bearable than getting someone to laugh with you — or even at you.

I have found that some of the funniest situations are those that make you cringe a little when you remember them. The combination of embarrassment and humor is a potent one. One of the best I can remember happening to me occurred early in my Green Section career. I had a couple of months on the staff under my belt and was starting to feel like perhaps I could do this job after all. Brimming with confidence (fragile as it was) I was making a TAS visit on a course in Nebraska. Along for the tour were the green committee, the golf professional, and the superintendent — the usual entourage.

Spouting one agronomic gem of wisdom after another, I lead the group through the course until we encountered a green with two, dark parallel lines crossing the surface. Having personally applied charcoal to many a hydraulic leak, I immediately diagnosed the injury. The superintendent laughed and the others on the visit frowned. I bent down to get a closer look and suddenly the lines moved just a bit. Power line shadows do that when the wind blows. We all had a great laugh but I will admit I have yet to make another visit to that course. I expect credibility may be the problem.

With this job, like most jobs, about the time you are having a few doubts about your ability, something happens to make you feel maybe you are doing some good after all. I recently traveled Dallas where one of the fellows on the visit felt the sand in the bunkers was bad because the ball would not hold the green when blasted out. Those of you familiar with my writing might remember I tend not to have a lot of sympathy with player complaints concerning the sand in the bunkers since they are, after all, a hazard.

However, this fellow was adamant that a requirement of bunker sand should be to allow players to impart backspin on the ball. To demonstrate this failing in the existing bunkers, he dropped a couple of balls and tried to blast out. After skulling a couple, he finally lofted one to the green and sure enough the ball rolled when it landed. Credibility thus restored, he challenged the pro to try a couple. The pro blasted away with all his shots landing on the green and rolling just a couple of feet. The player then reasoned the pro was not of average ability so he then handed the club to the superintendent. Now, I thought, is the time to cringe. Instead, the

super blasted out two shots that stopped even quicker than the pro's. Well shoot, I might as well try to.

Dropping a ball, I quickly reviewed the Johnny Miller sand tips I read in 1971, opened the face, swung outside-in, and lucked out.

The ball actually hit and backed up. Case closed!

Unfortunately, there is a sequel to this story. A couple of weeks after this demonstration of my



Jim Moore

playing skill, as it relates to the agronomic condition of the course, I was on a visit to a course in Mexico. The complaint this time was that the greens did not hold an approach shot — even with a wedge. Careful to pick an uphill

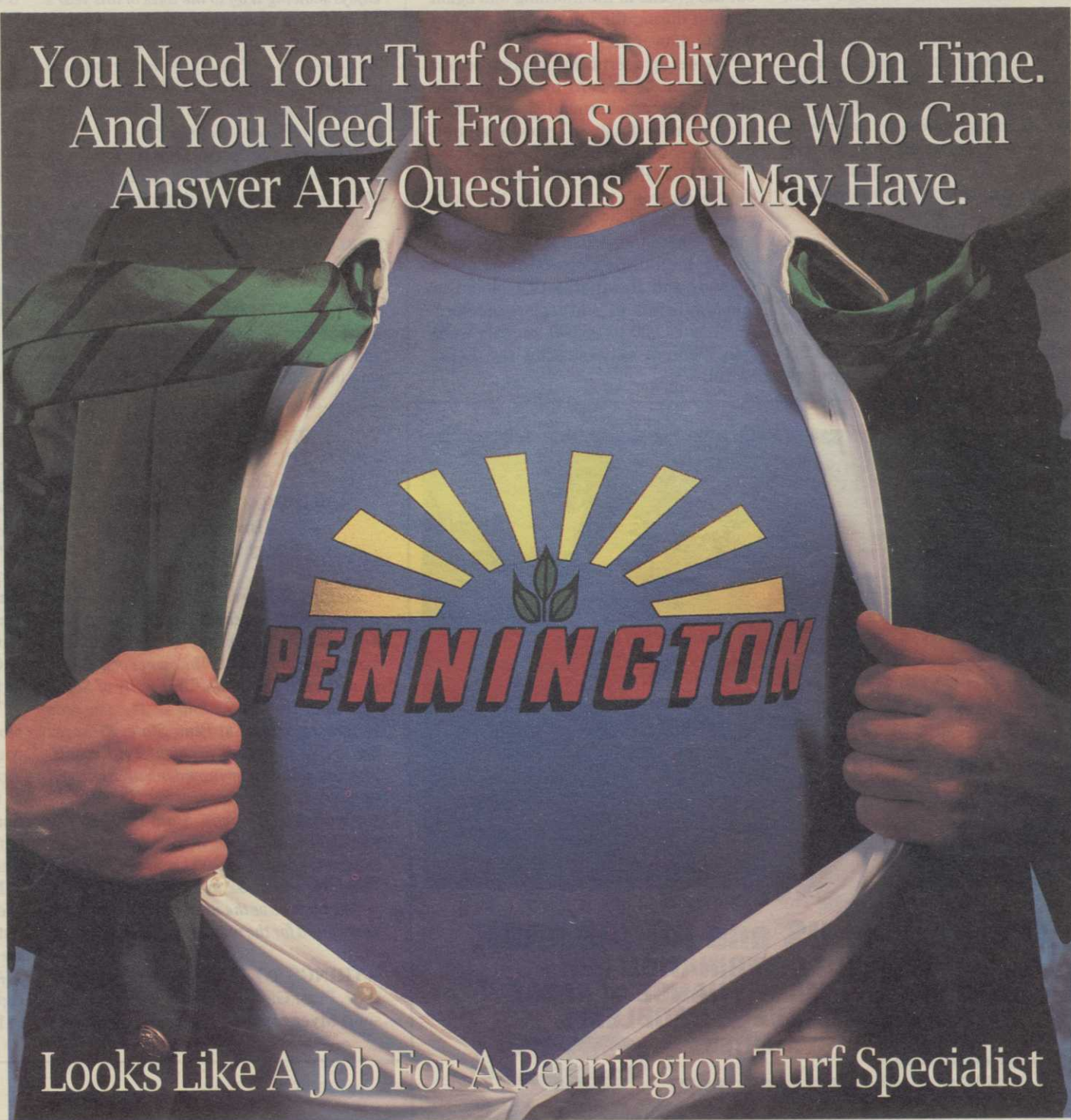
lie, into the wind, and to a green that looked over watered, I decided once again to prove the complaining player wrong by embarrassing him with the fact that even a grass guy can hold the greens.

After shanking the first three shots and nearly hitting one of our group about 90 degrees off line, I gave up and tried to remind everyone I was there as an agronomist — not a player. Big cringe.

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