



## Cover controversy

When I received my January copy of *Golf Course News*, I, along with everyone on my staff, asked, "Why is the director of agronomy in the background?" I hate to see a picture like that right before we have our first conference together. I know many superintendents are concerned about having the general managers there with us. While the g.m. might be "large and in charge," a picture of them together would have promoted the team concept much better.

**Ken Mangum, CGCS**  
 Director of golf courses and grounds  
 Atlanta Athletic Club  
 Duluth, Ga.

I don't understand the reason for the general manager being featured in the foreground and the director of agronomy positioned in the background on the January cover. With so many of your past feature articles dealing with teamwork and relationships, I'm surprised you would position the superintendent in what seems to be a less-important role. As I read the cover article, the g.m. seemed to take a more active communication role of describing the need for the improved driving range and short-game facility.

You sourced the c.o.o. for the Oakland Hills project, the g.m. for the Estancia project, the g.m. and director of golf for the Lancaster Country Club project and the head golf professional for the Naperville Country Club project. With the exception of the director of agronomy, Mike Mongiello, CGCS, there was no input from the golf course operations area.

Perhaps you're attempting to branch out and appeal to the allied associations and professionals within the golf industry. That's your prerogative. The article would have had more credibility if you used more input from those who build and maintain the facilities you described.

While I don't intend to speak for any of my peers who might work at the four facilities you described, the impression is that the g.m. on the course with the superintendent in the background sends the wrong message of teamwork. I'd feel uncomfortable if I were asked to take a photo and our golf professional, g.m. or any of my staff were asked

to stand in the background. In a true g.m. structure, everyone knows who's in charge. You don't need to show or tell everyone who's important and who's not. Normally, there's a reason someone or something is placed in the background.

**Tommy D. Witt, CGCS**  
 Director of golf course operations  
 Northmoor Country Club  
 Highland Park, Ill.

Regarding the January issue's cover and T.R. Massey's article, superintendents are very sensitive about political issues, especially when it portrays our profession as secondary. No other employee at a facility understands or has the knowledge about how to best manage and improve the golf course than the golf course superintendent. Massey's article leads the reader to feel otherwise. The issue will raise some eyebrows and reflect poorly on the publication from its largest targeted audience.

**Dan Dinelli, CGCS**  
 North Shore Country Club  
 Northbrook, Ill.

I don't find the picture degrading to me nor do I assume it was intended to misrepresent the role of a golf course superintendent. I thought the article was well written and covered the subject matter thoroughly.

After being a certified superintendent for 30 years, I can assure you I'm very confident in the role I have at Estancia and enjoy the working relationship I have with all the staff, especially with Keith Underwood. Keith was a little uncomfortable standing with a golf club on the green, however, we both understood the topic was about the practice facility and not about our positions at the club.

**Mike Mongiello, CGCS**  
 Directory of agronomy  
 The Estancia Club  
 Scottsdale, Ariz.

*Editor's response:*

It was not the staff's intention to portray the superintendent profession as second-

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ary to the general manager. If you read the cover story, hopefully you'll understand this. The intent was to get input from various members of management teams at several golf facilities about the importance of practice facilities.

To capture this visually, we wanted to photograph the director of agronomy and the general manager of the Estancia Club on the cover with a practice facility as the backdrop. The director of agronomy wasn't placed in the background because of his profession or title. It was an artistic decision made by the photographer to show depth to create an interesting cover. Cover art shouldn't be mistaken for editorial opinion, and you shouldn't read too much into it.

Other questions arise about this topic: Why are superintendents so sensitive about small things like this? If the roles were reversed, would general managers, who are among our readers, write the same letters?

The g.m./superintendent relationship signi-

fies the importance of management teams making decisions. GCI's objective is to provide a wide range of information that will help golf facilities, as a whole, succeed. The superintendent may be the main target audience, but assistant superintendents all the way up to owners also are part of that operational success. We'll continue to report on and analyze that.

GCI's role in the market is to cover the entire golf business. Take a look at this month's cover (which was done well before we started getting these letters) to see how the magazine thinks the future of the business is shaping up. Teamwork is the key, and sometimes one member of the team is out in front of the others.

Thanks for your comments, and keep reading.

**John Walsh**  
Editor

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