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SUPERINTENDENT'S GUIDE TO SURVIVING A COURSE RENOVATION, PART 2

In August, Tim Moraghan provided Part 1 of his guidelines to making the best of a course renovation. This month, Tim's column (Part 2) picks up where he left off. To read Part 1, enter <http://bit.ly/pAyuBu> into your browser.

Know the architect. If you do get lucky and the managers allow you to have some say in the architect selection, be aware of the special concerns of your course in your research. Here's what the smart superintendent should look for in an architect.

- Ability. It sounds obvious but isn't always, and won't be to the committee, either. Besides checking with the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA), learn as much as you can about the designer's other work, both new courses and re-dos. Check his references.

- Visit his work. Get a feeling for what he did with the land and features. It's very important that you talk to other superintendents and get a feel for the working relationship between them and the architect.

- Talk to course builders the architect has worked with. Ask if the designer has a good sense of the game and cares about those who will be affected by the results.

- Ask the other supers and builders if the designer actually gets on a piece of equipment and does some work, some shaping, himself. How good is he at transferring a thought from paper to ground? Is he willing to be flexible and admit when something doesn't work?

ASK QUESTIONS TO PREPARE AND EASE THE PROCESS.

- Watch out for design plans that

are overly technical and engineered; not transferring well from paper to dirt. Will the end result be a course that is both playable and easy to maintain? Review each hole with the architect, watching in particular for difficult agronomic scenarios, so problems can't come back to bite you.

- Other items to watch for:

High-faced bunkers in areas subject to heavy rain; too many catch basins in lieu of surface drainage; greens in heavily shaded areas and adjacent to creeks. I'm sure you can think of others on your course.

With the new plans in hand, **walk the course with a critical eye**. Where has it lost its zest? If it were up to you, what would you do to make it exciting again?

- Is there someone around who witnessed the original building of the course? If so, talk to him. Who knows what you'll learn?

- With the new plans in hand, walk the course with a critical eye. Where has it lost its zest? If it were up to you, what would you do to make it exciting again? What does the architect suggest? If you are restoring lost features, use your soil probe and dig for treasure in finding those lost shapes and edges.

BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION. Once you're good with the project and have let everyone know that you'll do all you can to make it work, here's how to proceed.

- Forge a good relationship with the designer. Reach out, talk, show that you are knowledgeable, caring and want to help. It would be nice if you become friends, but it's more

important that you can work together for the greater good of the course.

- Become the go-to person for your club members, particularly the committees and the board. Educate them on what they have now (good and bad) and what they can expect. Keep them informed, talk to them as often as you can and if you say you're going to do something, do it.

- In talking to the committees, establish one consensus opinion. Make sure everyone buys into it. If not, you'll be the one who loses out.

- If you've done historical research,

use it. Show the architect and members the old photos, architectural drawings and renderings you found.

- You're on-site more than the designer, so bring committee members onto the course and show them how the work is progressing. Don't wait for the architect's site visit. Take the initiative!

- Remember to keep your staff up to speed, as well. You'll need them more than ever. And you probably want to tell them how much they can and cannot say to members about the work going on.

- No matter how much work you do, remember that it's not your course or your club. You're still an employee and you do not have final say in what happens. If you have a strong opinion about something, only you can judge your relationship with the members and committees and then determine if you want to speak up. **GCI**