

SWING THOUGHT

One of the big misconceptions about all of us who make a living in this silly business is that we play golf all the time. Bet you've heard that one a million times huh?

The truth is the average insurance agent probably plays more rounds than most of us. And anyone who's played once in the past five months has played more than me. I just occurred to me that I haven't touched a club since the Carolinas GCSA tournament last November.

But, by the time you read this, I hope to have had a chance to get out. It might actually crack 50 degrees here in Cleveland soon and I will probably sneak down to one of our fantastic local Cleveland Metroparks courses and whack some balls around. But, before I do, I will go through my annual ritual of finding a swing thought for the year.

Each season, I pick a swing thought in a futile attempt to find that one thing – that one crazy little thing – that will convert me from truly lousy to happily mediocre. Last year it was “don't move your nose.” That kind of worked. My head was a little steadier and my body was a little quieter. It didn't keep me from going a mile past parallel or from swinging waaaaaay too hard most of the time. But, it gave me something to concentrate on. It gave me a simple goal.

In talking with superintendents over the last month who've all been waiting for the long delayed season to begin (the polar opposite of 2012), I've asked them about their “swing thought” for this agronomic season. What simple watchword or concept are they going to focus on every day to strive for constant improvement this season?

For a couple, it was “Soil.” They're attempting to use the season to fix imbalances in soils that cause so many other issues in the green stuff growing above it.

For another, it was “Balance.” He's trying to

keep his home life as positive and productive as his work life.

For a very old friend, it was “Survive.” He feels like he has a target on his back and he's worried he's lost the support of some key members and his GM.

I hate the fact that “Survive” has become the dominant thought for anyone as they begin another season in this profession. It shouldn't be like that, but it is. We are in a cycle in our industry right now where experience isn't valued enough, there are far more qualified people than there are jobs, and stress – which has always been an occupational hazard – is at an all-time high for many.



Pat Jones
Editorial director and publisher

Going into a season fearing the worst is simply wrong. It's wrong that he's in that position and can't really talk to others about it (he worries word will get out and the vultures will start to circle looking to snag the job if it comes open). It's wrong that he can't communicate openly

with key folks at his facility and try to work things out (they don't understand, he says). And, it's wrong that he – like many others – may simply be a victim of the fact that the club is restless and wants to make a change for the sake of making a change.

That's a crappy thing. And “Survive” is a crappy thought to have in your head for the season.

Instead, why not focus on “Thrive”? Why not let go of what you can't control and focus on doing a great job with what you can? Why not give off a positive vibe and help to lift others around you? Why not do your best under tough circumstances? Why not adopt an attitude that you can and will not just make it, but do it really well?

Why not make “Thrive” your watchword for the year?

Oh...but don't forget to update your resume...just in case.

Have a great year! **GCI**

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GIE Media, Inc.

4020 Kinross Lakes Pkwy, 2nd floor

Richfield, OH 44286

Phone: 800-456-0707

Fax: 330-659-0823

EDITORIAL

Pat Jones

Publisher/Editorial director
pjones@gie.net

Mike Zawacki

Editor
mzawacki@gie.net

Kyle Brown

Associate Editor
kbrown@gie.net

Bruce Williams

Senior contributing editor

Katie Tuttle

Assistant Editor
ktuttle@gie.net

SALES

Russell Warner

National account manager
216-236-5802

Martha Corfman

Manager, books
330-523-5366

Ted Schuld

Account manager
216-236-5937

Maria Miller

Conferences manager
330-523-5373

Bonnie Velikonya

Classified sales
330-523-5322

Jodi Shipley

Marketing coordinator
330-523-5368

GRAPHICS / PRODUCTION

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