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## TIM THE TWEETMAN

**G**CI has been on Twitter for at least five years. We have nearly 2,700 followers and we've fired close to 5,000 140-character missives into cyberspace, including exclusive breaking news items, live coverage of events, award-winning articles, pithy observations and the best tweets from our friends. We have a group of editors who spend a lot of time and effort doing social media well to create conversation in the market and drive readership of our content.

Our pal Tim Moraghan (@Tim-Moraghan), by contrast, has been on Twitter for about a year, has a couple of hundred followers and has sent fewer than 500 tweets. Tim is not exactly Mr. Social Media, but he does it occasionally when his full-time job of helping golf facilities perform better isn't keeping him way too busy.

Yet, at the end of July, he fired off one powerful message that had (at press time) been retweeted more than 40 times. This is at least double the number of the much-coveted retweets we "professionals" have ever achieved over the course of many more years and ten times more tweets.

Here's what Tim fired off into the Twitterverse the morning of July 30:

"In our profession turf loss due to extreme weather should not equal GCS job loss. All board members, GMs and golf pros hear me on this."

In short, Tim – a respected industry authority with street cred earned over a couple decades of setting up USGA championships – said what every superintendent hopes his or her boss will understand when weather-related stress coincides with high expectations. For many, that time is right now.

Here's what clubs and employers need to understand: Superintendents are highly dedicated, well-educated

and thoughtful stewards of the land who, under normal circumstances can provide amazing playing fields for the wonderful game of golf. They are not, however, alchemists who can magically change the physical properties of plants to make them withstand the brutality of Mother Nature when she's pissed off.

It is flat-out wrong to fire someone because of the unpredictable and unpreventable whims of weather. Tim the Tweetman Moraghan is 100 percent right and I hope that other credible voices will chime in to support him.

But here's the thing: I think the number of supers who actually get fired because "golfers don't get it" is way smaller than it used to be. My sense is that decades of education among club officials, owners and others who hold the employment fate of supers in their hands has helped. Awareness of the role you play in the economic success of facilities is sky-high compared to even 15 years ago. The USGA, in particular, has become a vocal cheerleader for supers. We've shed the greenkeeper thing completely and moved into a new and increasingly envious stature in the industry. It seems counterintuitive but the recent Great Recession made superintendents greater in importance and value within the golf management hierarchy.

Don't get me wrong... I know astoundingly dumb, arbitrary and just plain goofy terminations happen a lot. There are still plenty of dumbass bosses out there who'll can a guy because the bunkers don't drain fast enough after a hundred-year flood. You can't fix stupid, even when it's wearing a tailored Ralph Lauren blazer and a rep tie.

But let's be honest. Sometimes the "weather-related firing" has only a little to do with the weather. It's really prob-

ably one of three things:

1. It's the straw that broke the camel's back. Over a string of consecutive years, little things have gone wrong and the super has gradually lost support. Then the grumbling turns into a pink slip when the turf checks out because of crazy summer heat.

2. They sense a convenient opportunity. They're looking for a reason to make a change and an out-of-nowhere explosion of Pythium gives them one. Usually the super has an enemy amongst the leadership and they're just bidding their time till some grass dies.

3. They want a divorce because they've fallen in love with someone new. Face it, it's a buyer's market for agronomic talent and there are hundreds of folks who'll gladly fill any good job.

Scratch the surface of many summertime terminations and you'll find one of these underlying causes lurking. I bet Tim will agree with that as much as I agree with the original sentiment of his tweet.

I'll bow to guys like Tim and Bruce Williams when it comes to giving advice about how to avoid becoming vulnerable to one of those three situations except to say that good communications before, during and after the crisis is critical. Document what you're doing, explain things in clear, simple terms and be absolutely honest about the situation. If the worst still happens, at least you can take solace in the fact you did your best and told the truth.

Tim's message resonated because it's crunch time. All those retweets were like little prayers to the golf gods for some peace of mind during the toughest weeks of the year. It's a terrible thing to be fighting nature and fighting for your livelihood at the same time. My wish to you, my friends, is that you never have to do it. **GCI**