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**Jeffrey D. Brauer** is a licensed golf course architect and president of GolfScapes, a golf course design firm in Arlington, Texas. Brauer, a past president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, can be reached at [jeff@jeffreymbrauer.com](mailto:jeff@jeffreymbrauer.com).

## SUPPLEMENTING YOUR ROLE

In the past few issues, I've written about the contractual responsibilities of an owner's construction evaluation team, including a golf course superintendent's role. In what's perhaps a classic case of putting the cart before the horse, these articles assume the superintendent will be the construction manager. The question each course's management team must ask is: Does the superintendent have enough knowledge and time to protect the club's interests completely? Every club should assess whether it has the ability to manage a project in-house. If there are doubts, consider the option of a professional construction manager or additional services from a golf course architect.

It's common for green committees and owners to turn to their resident expert, the superintendent, for this task. Often, a superintendent is management's first and most logical choice to oversee a course construction project. A superintendent knows the most about a course, course construction and what a final product should look like. Many can produce quality results with in-house crews to aid or supplant the contractor in some cases. Also, most renovations need to remain within a budget, limiting options for additional consultants.

Perhaps because it's not sticks and bricks, many owners and the golf course construction industry don't use construction administration tools as diligently as other building professions. Although just as much can go wrong with golf course construction, one well-known turf management textbook perpetuates and compounds this idea by describing construction contracts as simple agreements. Architects, owners and contractors who have been through litigation would beg to differ.

The bottom line is that when you're spending millions of dollars, it pays to watch over the investment closely. So, although eminently qualified in his field, a superintendent might be at a disadvantage when attempting to represent his owner and might not feel comfortable doing so with so much on the line. Renovations that fail to meet expectations have cost superintendents their jobs.

Superintendents still will play a crucial role in any renovation, but if the stakes are high enough, supplementing their role with professional project management might make sense. The case can be made that it's a separate discipline from turf management, and, when done correctly,

**Many owners and the golf course construction industry don't use construction administration tools as diligently as other building professions.**

is a full-time job. Also, the consequences of saving money are significant. The contractor will have more experience than most superintendents preparing contracts and negotiating change orders, which most will use to their financial advantage.

The real potential for cost overruns lies in missing the schedule, where revenue losses become a considerable factor. During construction, a wasted week at the beginning of a project equals a month's delay at the end, and a wasted month might turn into a lost year of revenue just as quickly. Without proper oversight, expensive surprises and costly delays are

more likely to occur.

If a professional construction manager saves the owner one big mistake or manages the schedule to an on-time completion, their fee is paid for over and over again, says Sam Sakocius, principal of Sakocius Management Group based in Cascade, Colo.

If you assess the situation and believe using your superintendent is the best option, you must schedule accordingly to have him trained. There are classes at the Golf Industry Show where the GCSAA, GCBA and ASGCA put on classroom clinics. Some turf maintenance programs at universities offer minimal training in construction management, so it's possible your superintendent or assistant has some training, and perhaps has kept his project management textbooks, which contain useful tactics. One text oriented to golf is Charles White's "The Turf Managers Handbook for Golf Course Construction, Renovation and Grow In," which has information about construction administration matters.

Given the importance of construction, clubs are advised to provide the superintendent with rudimentary training before construction and extra professional training about project management. The assistance could come from a golf course architect or construction management consultant on a full- or part-time basis. The aforementioned textbook recommends this as the ideal situation.

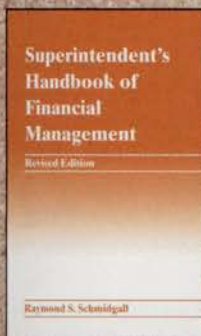
A renovation project is a disruptive and stressful time, and sometimes a club's viability depends on a renovation. It goes without saying that any work done should be done right. While having an experienced professional project manager might seem like overkill and doesn't guarantee a problem-free project, it ensures the best possible outcome under the circumstances you might encounter during renovation. **GCI**



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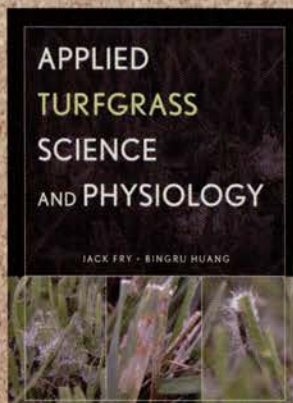
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## Superintendent's Handbook of Financial Management, Revised Edition

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Raymond S. Schmidgall  
ISBN: 0-471-46319-1. Hardcover,  
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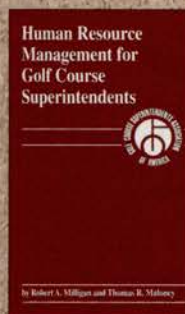
The key to any successful business is the effective management of revenue, costs and of course profitability. This book provides golf course superintendents with the necessary tools to manage their daily financial operations by explaining basic accounting principles such as pricing, budgeting, cost control, payroll and cash flow.



## Applied Turfgrass Science and Physiology \$80

Jack Fry, Bingru Huang  
ISBN: 0-471-47270-0, Hardcover, 320 pages, July 2004

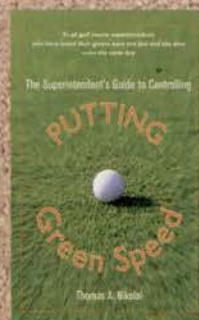
Applied Turfgrass Science and Physiology illustrates topics with research results from peer-reviewed scientific journals to provide insight into how principles and techniques work in real-world practice. Case studies help reinforce material for students as well as professionals seeking to advance their careers.



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192 pages, July 2002

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Thomas Nikolai  
ISBN: 0-471-47272-7, Hardcover, 160 pages,  
October 2004

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## JOB SECURITY VIA THE RULES

**G**olf course superintendents have been cautioned consistently through their careers to be familiar with the Rules of Golf so they would understand how the Rules applied specifically to their golf courses. The worry always has been, for example, that hazard lines might be laid down in a manner that created unfair dropping areas, or tee markers might be placed so close to the back edge of tees, they don't allow for the two-club-length-deep teeing ground the Rules require.

While this caution is justified, it doesn't come close to identifying what the true value of the Rules can mean to a superintendent. In support of this premise, I recommend a nine-step, Rules-based program intended to provide participating superintendents access to the national golf fraternity (those players and representatives of golf who are recognized specially by their peers for their respect for and service to the game). Accordingly, it's recommended that superintendents should:

**Step 1:** Take the time to ensure they'll be able to play the game comfortably at their natural playing level. A wide range of final scoring is acceptable provided superintendents play at a good pace and accept bad shot-making gracefully.

**Step 2:** Take playing lessons every year at their home course from the host golf professional staff and be seen doing this. Lessons will stabilize playing ability, and being seen taking lessons will send the message to all who notice that the superintendent wants to become an integral part of the playing fraternity of golf.

**Step 3:** Play at least 20 rounds a season with course members/players and officials – briefly discussing course issues during each round – giving priority to playing with each board/council and green committee member once a season.

**Step 4:** Visibly participate in the club's/course's handicap computation service. This will show respect for the game and earn greater acceptance within the golf fraternity.

**Step 5:** Initially, commit to acquiring a complete understanding of the Rules of Golf, which will require becoming knowledgeable about the current Rules book, as well as purchasing and becoming familiar with the organizational structure of the 515-page *Decisions of Golf* book.

**Step 6:** Register for a USGA/PGA Rules of Golf multiday workshop once a year for the few years it takes to become accomplished with the Rules – a situation that's measured at the end of each Rules workshop via testing. Fifty percent of questions are open book, and 50 percent are closed book based on a working knowledge of the Rules book (not the *Decisions* book).

**Step 7:** The natural follow-up to scoring credibly on the Rules workshop test would be for a superintendent to be invited to serve on the Rules Committee at the club/course where he or she works.

**Step 8:** The next natural follow-up would be for a superintendent to apply to become a member of the Junior Rules Committee (start slowly by working junior qualifying rounds) for the regional/state golf association, later graduating to work at the more visible local association events as time away from work and accomplishment with the Rules allow.

**Step 9:** The final follow-up (for those willing to make the extra commitment) would be for a superintendent to aspire to receive an invitation to serve on the USGA Rules Committee (thereby qualifying to officiate at USGA events) through multiple years of accomplished officiating service at the regional/state golf association level. Because relatively few are chosen for this assignment, this final goal should be looked at as a lifetime pursuit worth the commitment because of the pride and sense of accomplishment to be realized.

Once superintendents complete steps six through eight (and possibly nine) above, they should make sure each of these unique

accomplishments is reported in their home course newsletters and Web sites. This commentary should focus on the quality and duration of commitment required to move through these levels of Rules accomplishments and how this brings honor and recognition to their clubs and courses.

Working through this nine-step Rules program will benefit superintendents in ways never anticipated previously. For example, superintendents will: (i) earn unprecedented professional respect; (ii) convert their present back-of-the-house image to a newly respected front-of-the-house image; (iii) acquire virtual guaranteed job security and fair compensation because employers will always be supportive of fellow peer members of the national golf fraternity servicing golf effectively; (iv) gain a decided edge when seeking new jobs because their job applications will command immediate attention and respect; and (v) enjoy more rewarding careers because of the enduring pride they'll have in themselves and bring to their profession.

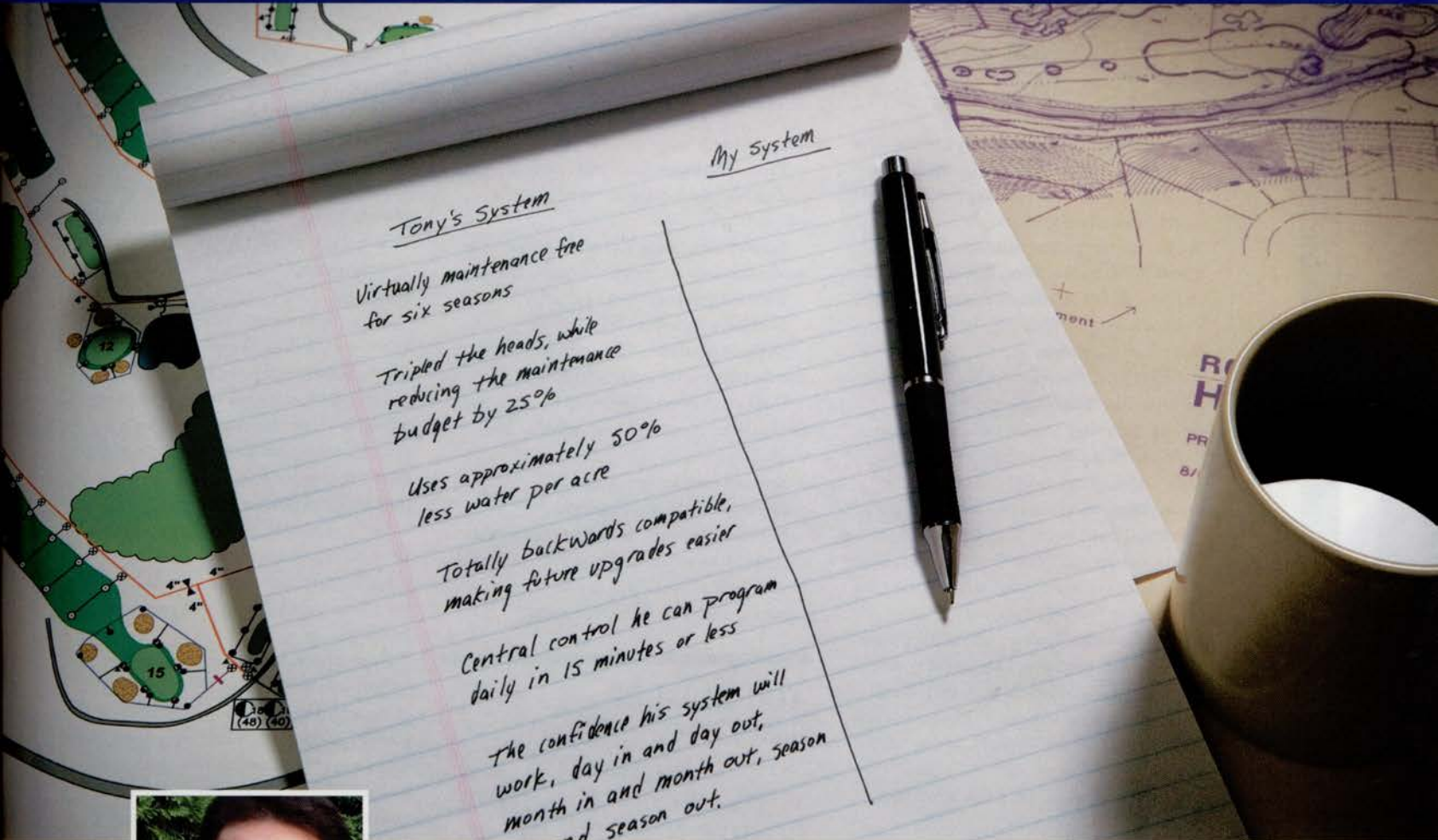
Clearly, this won't be an easy road to travel, but it's one in which the benefits gained are valued and true. Who would've thought the Rules of Golf could deliver treasures forever sought but never previously perceived as being deliverable to superintendents? **GCI**

### THE RULES OF GOLF 1744

Working through  
this nine-step Rules  
program will benefit  
superintendents in  
ways never anticipated  
previously.



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**Tony Girardi**, Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS), Rockrimmon Country Club, Stamford, CT

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**Robert A. Milligan, Ph.D.**, is professor emeritus from Cornell University and senior consultant with Madison, Wis.-based Dairy Strategies. He can be reached at 651-647-0495 or [rmilligan@trsmith.com](mailto:rmilligan@trsmith.com).

## ASSERTIVE, NOT AGGRESSIVE

An effective communicator is assertive and sensitive without being aggressive. You must be assertive, especially when interacting with employees, to ensure the goal of the communication is attained. You need to be sensitive, but not aggressive, so the person you're communicating with – employee, golfer, family, friend – isn't placed on the defensive.

Assertive means presenting your feelings, positions or requests clearly and calmly. Sensitive means taking the time to understand another person's ideas, positions and feelings clearly. Sensitivity also means respecting those ideas and positions when you don't agree with them. Sensitivity means having empathy. Empathy is walking in another's shoes or mentally entering into the spirit or feeling of another person.

Let's look at a work problem: Two maintenance staff employees argue every week when the work schedule is posted. Each week, something like the following occurs:

**Superintendent:** "What's wrong with you guys?"

**First employee:** "He has a more favorable schedule."

**Second employee:** "No. You always favor him when scheduling."

**Superintendent:** There's no reason to argue. We're a team, so don't disagree. I don't want any arguing next week."

There's nothing incorrect about the superintendent's response, except that it's not solving the problem. In fact, the employee conflict is infecting the staff, who are complaining about work schedules, morale and declining productivity. A more empathic approach, in addition to asking questions, is:

**Superintendent:** "What's the problem here?"

**First employee:** "He has a more favorable schedule."

**Second employee:** "No. You always favor him when scheduling."

**Superintendent:** "Is the schedule really

the problem?"

**First employee** (sheepishly): "No, not really. We had a disagreement about a woman."

**Superintendent:** "Is fighting about the work schedule accomplishing anything?"

**First employee:** "Not really."

**Second employee:** "No."

**Superintendent:** "What do you think should happen with the schedule?"

**First employee:** "We need to solve our personal problem and keep it away from work."

**Second employee:** "I agree."

**Superintendent:** "Excellent."

Supervisors often think the second dialogue is an example of getting too involved in employees' lives. This is a legitimate concern, and it's a fine-line issue.

You must be assertive, especially when interacting with employees, to ensure the goal of communication is attained.

To investigate this fine line further, remember your responsibility is to ensure those you supervise succeed. In the example above, showing empathy and revealing the real issue, even though it was personal, resolved a conflict that had become a barrier to employee and course success. The focus was employee performance. That it brought out personal issues was secondary.

Let's look at another situation in which a superintendent's involvement did little to resolve an issue. The dialogue below is with an employee who normally has excellent work habits but has been late three times in the last two weeks.

**Superintendent:** "Jim, how are you?"

**Employee:** "I'm so-so."

**Superintendent:** "I'm here because you've been late three times during the past two weeks. You've always had an excellent attendance record."

**Employee:** "Oh. I was hoping you wouldn't notice. I'm having car problems."

**Superintendent:** "Cars can be irritating."

**Employee:** "I'm really trying. I know it'll get better."

**Superintendent:** "I'm sure it will. "I know it's the little things that can drag you down, but I know you can do better."

The problem is that the superintendent, trying to show empathy, was sensitive, actually overly sympathetic, but wasn't assertive. No progress was made in solving the tardiness problem.

In the dialogue below the superintendent is empathic, sensitive and assertive to resolve the tardiness problem without becoming overly sympathetic to the employee's problem.

**Superintendent:** "Jim, How are you?"

**Employee:** "I'm so-so."

**Superintendent:** "I'm here because you've been late for work three times during the past two weeks. You've always had an excellent attendance record."

**Employee:** "Oh. I was hoping you wouldn't notice. I'm having car problems."

**Superintendent:** "Jim, you know the course policy on such issues. We will do what we can to help, but it's your responsibility to be at work and maintain outstanding work performance. I know cars can be frustrating. We feel like we have little control. Do you remember the company has an employee loan program? I also recall that a couple employees live in your direction."

**Employee:** "Those are good ideas. I guess I'm not thinking clearly. Thank you for the ideas. They'll help."

**Superintendent:** "I'm pleased I could help. I'll check with you in a week and expect you'll have been on time every day."

**Employee:** "That will work."

As you communicate with employees and others, focus on being assertive and sensitive without being aggressive. **GCI**





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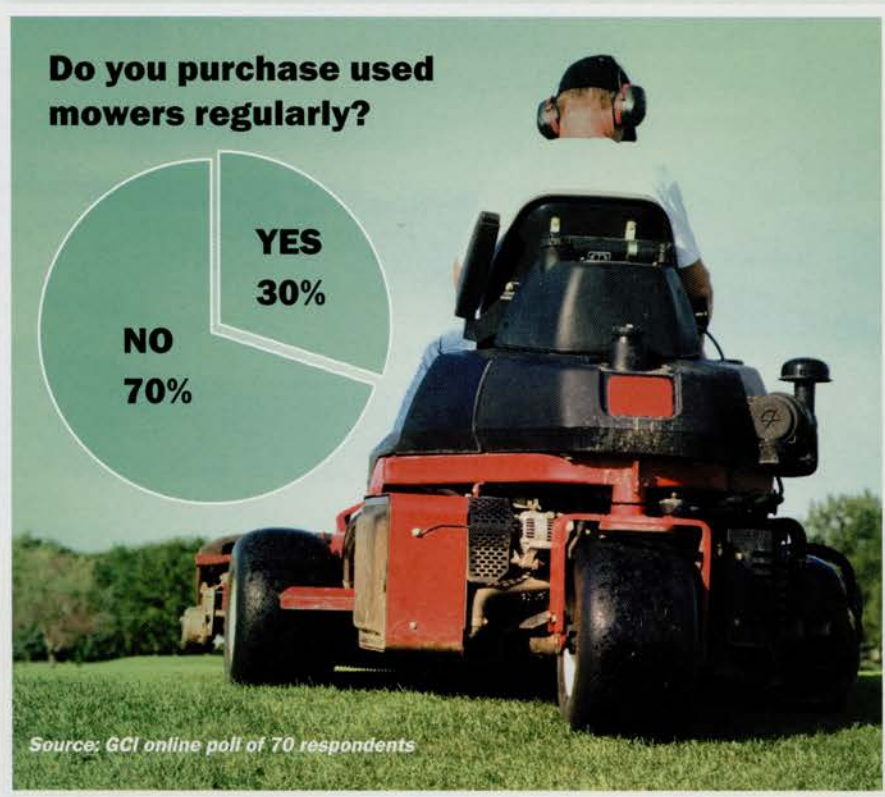
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## Slow play – myth or reality?

In a recent nationwide survey, adult golfers were asked how long it takes to play an 18-hole round of golf on average. Respondents included golfers at public and private courses. The most common answer was four hours. Significantly, 90 percent indicated they play in four and a half hours or less.

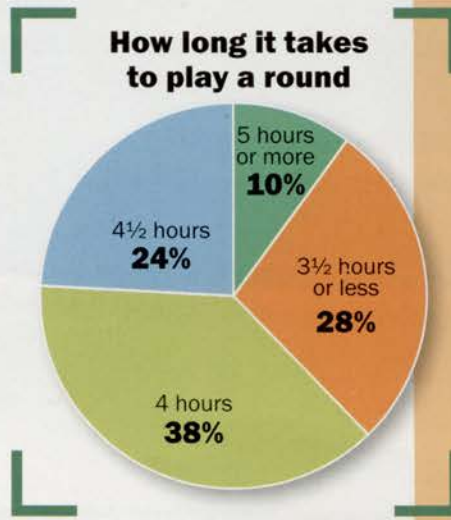
Regardless of how long it takes to play a round of golf, more than three-quarters (78 percent) said their pace is about right; 20 percent said it's slow; and 2 percent said it's fast. Of the 20 percent of golfers who said their pace was too slow:

- 20 percent said it bothers them, and they play less as a result;
- 56 percent said it bothers them, but it doesn't cause them to play less; and
- 24 percent said it doesn't really bother them.

The first group represents about one million players or 4 percent of all adult golfers. Six in 10 of these players are occasional golfers (one to seven rounds annually), so they have a minimal impact on rounds volume.

While three out of four golfers feel their pace is about right, it doesn't necessarily eliminate the need for slow-play solutions. In fact, it might be because of combating slow play the problem isn't perceived to be as bad as it might.

Source: National Golf Foundation



## Quotables

"In today's climate, it's more about economics than agronomics. I spend more time examining Excel spreadsheets than I do turf. The time I used to spend calibrating spreaders and sprayers have been replaced by calculating labor hours and line-item expenditures."

– **Kerry Satterwhite**, CGCS, superintendent of golf course maintenance for the city of Bloomington, Ill.

"I wish every college kid could go through the construction process to see how much work is involved. It's not easy."

– **Richard Hurd**, assistant golf course superintendent at Saddle Rock Golf Course in Aurora, Colo.

"Massachusetts has no regulations on wash water, or rinsate, so, in essence, we were polluting. To coin a phrase I'm fond of, 'the past belongs to the future.' What we're doing now will influence future generations." – **Paul Miller**, CGCS, Nashawtuc Country Club in Concord, Mass.

"If you don't learn, it's because you don't want to." – **Rafael Barajas**, CGCS, at Hacienda Golf Club of La Habra Heights, Calif., about the opportunities to learn new skills or enhance existing ones because of the availability of so many resources accessible to superintendents, regardless geographic location or work schedule



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# Making a splash in the turf business

*Jerry Pate is swimming in just about every pond in golf*

BY PAT JONES

He's the unlikeliest of renaissance men. He doesn't necessarily have the flair of most Tour players – despite being responsible for memorable moments during the U.S. Open and The Players Championship. People forget he was a color commentator on TV long before Johnny Miller started talking grain. He isn't the first name that pops to mind when you think of successful golf course architects, but his courses are lauded for their beauty and playability. He doesn't act like a business mogul, yet he operates one of the largest turf equipment companies in the Southeast. He sure as heck doesn't come off as a farmer, but he owns a sod farm that provides turf for the courses he builds and others in the region.

Jerry Pate has an iron in the fire of just about every aspect of golf but, like Rodney Dangerfield, he doesn't seem to get the respect that more flamboyant figures might command.

Pate broke into prominence three decades ago with a win at the U.S. Amateur in 1975 and a spot on the winning team at the Walker Cup that same year. But, a year later, he defined "rookie sensation" by winning the U.S. Open and the Canadian Open during his first year as a pro. He went on to win six more times on the regular Tour, including the inaugural Players Championship at the nasty TPC Sawgrass Stadium Course. Though already an Open champion, he gained immortality and expressed the opinion of many of his colleagues by tossing designer Pete Dye and then-commissioner Deane Beman into the pond on the 18th hole before joining them for a celebratory swim.

Like many pros, he got older (and had a succession of injuries) and his playing skills couldn't quite keep up with the young guns. Thus, he began to diversify into broadcasting, turf sales, design and even sod production. Still, when he turned 50 two years ago, he joined the Champions Tour and played regularly. Last year, before shoulder surgery cut his season short, he won his first tournament in 23 years (and claimed his largest-ever paycheck) at the Outback Steakhouse Pro-Am in Tampa, Fla. Yes,