



Tournament Ready® Soil Surfactant performs as well or better than our competitors' top selling brands, including Revolution® for up to 35% less. Now you can get the most from water, without being dragged under by the cost.



The Science of Common Sense.

800.255.5196

kalo.com

© 2008 KALO, Inc. All rights reserved. Tournament-Ready® is a registered trademark of KALO, Inc. Revolution® is a registered trademark of Aquatrols Corporation of America.

www.golfcourseindustry.com/readerservice - #31

COPACETIC CREWS

Superintendents need good people skills to manage staffs effectively

BY DAVID MCPHERSON



Part Dr. Phil, part turf doctor, golf course superintendents are more than just keepers of the green. As leaders of large crews, good people skills are just as essential as agronomic expertise.

"I'm not just growing grass," says Brian Netz, superintendent at Presidio Golf Course in San Francisco. "I'm growing people who will move on and be successful in whatever they choose."

So, how do superintendents succeed at "growing" good crews and earning their respect? It's all about knowing how to treat people and recognizing the human capital that maintains the course, Netz says.

"I tell my staff I could get monkeys to do most of the jobs out here and pay them bananas, but I want people who will think about what they're doing and will make more good decisions than bad decisions," he says. "I've been lucky always being able to surround myself with quality people who feel about the golf course like I do. It's more than a paycheck ... it's a labor of love and a reflection of who we are."

Netz's enthusiasm rubs off on others.

"I always try to point out when people are doing things right, and I try to do it in front of the entire staff," he says. "I make sure my staff knows I'm here to help them succeed as contributing members to the world. I've helped them through credit woes, alcohol addiction, immigration issues, etc. We spend more than nine hours together each day, so we're a family."

On average, a superintendent manages a staff of 21 or more people, according to GCSAA's most recent compensation and benefits survey. Many are seasonal part-time workers, while a few, such as head mechanics and first and second assistants, are full time. Workers range from teenagers to retirees and come from various socioeconomic backgrounds, so superintendents need to be sensitive to these differences.

In many ways, the skills required to be a successful leader in the golf course industry are no different than leading employees in an office setting. Many of the same management 101 skills apply. A superintendent must motivate and gain workers' respect through listening, communicating, empowering and rewarding.

PEOPLE SKILLS

Jim Husting, CGCS, at the private, 27-hole Woodbridge Golf & Country Club in Woodbridge, Calif., agrees with Netz that managing people is the most challenging aspect of a superintendent's job.

"Other than outside forces you can't control, such as budgets and wages, the biggest challenge to motivate your crew is managing personality conflicts," Husting says. "It's almost impossible to think when you get 17 people together they're all going to get along."

Husting jokingly says he should've taken more psychology classes in college.

"You're part referee and part psychologist," he says. "People

They might as well key your car.

Turf can be damaged by everything from a golf cart on a wet day to fungus and disease. The Turf Essentials™ combination fungicides, along with Daconil®, provide a streamlined approach to preventing a broad spectrum of turf diseases. Like you, Syngenta understands the impact no matter what's affecting your course. **We take conditions personally.**

1-866-SYNGENTA • TurfEssentials.com

©2008 Syngenta. Syngenta Professional Products, Greensboro, NC 27419. Important: Always read and follow label instructions before buying or using these products. Concert®, Daconil ULTREX®, Headway®, Instrata®, SuperWeatherStik®, The Turf Essentials™, and the Syngenta logo are trademarks of a Syngenta Group Company.



have personal matters that follow them to work, whether it's divorce, health problems or other family matters. You have to be a good listener. When someone is feeling down, you need to ask him what's going on and listen. When they're having family problems, give them time off to be with their family ... the golf course will still be there."

Another key to motivating a crew is leading by example, says Shane Wright, CGCS, at Vero Beach (Fla.) Country Club.

"You can't expect them to work hard if you're only working 20 hours a week," Wright says. "When the crew knows you're willing to sacrifice to make the course the best it can be, they'll follow suit."

One of the biggest sacrifices any crew member has to make is his sleep – getting up before sunrise is half the battle.

"It's not easy to motivate 40 people at 5:30 a.m.," says Scott Bowman, golf course superintendent at Glen Abbey Golf Club in Oakville, Ontario, host of the 2008 RBC Canadian Open. "I tell them as long as you can get here by 5:30 a.m., the rest is easy."

Bowman agrees with Wright that leading by example is a proven way to inspire workers right from the moment a superintendent arrives.

"I like to be out there and work hard with the



Scott Bowman's leadership and ability to motivate his crew were crucial to the success of last year's PGA Tour event, held at Glen Abbey. The week of the Canadian Open, Mother Nature dumped 9 inches of rain on the course.

staff," he says. "I try to be here every morning before they are. If they see the boss is here on time every morning ... for the younger crew, that's half the battle. I try to be here 45 minutes before start time and open the shop up. If they see you doing that, they see you're focused on your end of the job as well, so it makes them get into it."

Bowman also tries to spend a little time with every employee. He may stop to ask one of the older fairway cutters how he's doing or ask one of the university students how his weekend was. He also may jump in a bunker or two with the crew.

"For them, to see a boss jump in and rake a bunker ... that goes a long way," he says.

Bowman's leadership and ability to motivate his crew were crucial to the success of last year's PGA Tour event, held at Glen Abbey. The week of the Canadian Open, Mother Nature dumped 9 inches of rain on the course. Without the dedication and teamwork of his regular crew of 40, plus an additional 20 volunteers, Bowman says the event would have been a flop.

A LITTLE REWARD GOES A LONG WAY

Recognition also goes a long way to gaining respect from crew members. Bowman doesn't believe in employee-of-the-month programs but emphasizes the importance of praise. He likes to treat everyone equally.

"I try to paint everybody with the same brush as far as staff events and recognition," he says. "Obviously, there are people who step up and go above other employees, but I try to give that recognition personally. All my incentives – staff barbecues, staff functions – I include everybody from high school students to the second assistant to the retired fairway cutter. That goes a long way because everyone sees they're on the same page."

Husting agrees with Bowman that recognition is paramount and helps gain more respect from a crew.

"They need to be recognized for the work they do," he says. "Some of the tasks are repetitive and menial, but they want to be praised as much as possible. I find verbal praise helps a lot."

Husting says Woodbridge hosts an annual salsa contest, complete with judges, which is a fun event his staff enjoys. Throughout the season, Husting also has departmental barbecues and an employee day where staff from all departments can play golf, swim and partake in other contests.

Phil Scully, golf course superintendent at the Granite Golf Club, a private course just north of Toronto says extracurricular activities – staff appreciation days or nights – are great ways to keep his team motivated, whether it's going bowling, playing paintball or the annual staff golf tournament in August.

"We shut the course down," he says. "Members aren't allowed on the property and senior staff from the Granite Club downtown come up and cook the meal. Many of my staff never go in the clubhouse because it is just for members, so this is their one time to go in there and be treated like a member."

SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE

At Presidio, Netz employs mainly Hispanics, so he speaks fluent conversational Spanish to relate better.

"I understand the language nuances and their inflections," he says. "I can automatically use phrases they can readily identify with, and this creates a greater level of understanding."

While literally speaking a crew's language isn't always immediately possible, what's more important is finding common conversation and making time to connect on a more personal level.

TIPS FOR EARNING YOUR CREW'S RESPECT

- Reward and recognize
- Be visible
- Treat others as you would like to be treated
- Treat every employee equally
- Be a good listener
- Set a good example
- Make them feel part of the big picture
- Let them make decisions and make mistakes, empower them
- Be flexible
- Communicate and have regular meetings
- Have fun

Avoid:

- Playing favorites
- Disciplining in public
- Acting like you're above the crew

The Power Of One.



Shift your business to the independent distributor members of PrimeraTurf® and tap into the power of a wide range of high-quality PrimeraOne™ products.

You'll find the products and the name of the distributor in your area at primeraone.com.

PrimeraONE

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

"Young kids like to see a boss who's human," Bowman says. "I like to talk to everyone in the morning. It doesn't have to be business related. It could be something that happened in the news. Just because I'm the superintendent doesn't mean I'm above and beyond."

Being a superintendent doesn't mean one's perfect.

"Everybody makes mistakes, myself included," Bowman says.

Husting shares what he learned from a memorable mistake he made early in his career.

"The one mistake I will never make again is to promote a staff member to assistant superintendent," he says. "There was a lot of resentment toward me and the individual promoted. That person was a member of the crew, a 'buddy-buddy' type thing, and then he was telling his 'buddies' what to do. It was a no-win situation. Since then, I've always gone outside and brought someone in."



Without the dedication and teamwork of a regular crew of 40, plus an additional 20 volunteers, the Canadian Open would have been a flop.

THE BIG PICTURE

Scully believes it's essential to make employees aware of the bigger picture, another factor that helps motivate staff. Every new season, the Granite Golf Club begins with a staff orientation, but it's not just for Scully's team. Rather, it's conducted over the course of three days each April by the human resources department for all new hires. This way everyone gets to see how the whole staff works together as a team.

"I've always said to my staff the reason I got into this business was because I hate assembly-line mentalities ... just doing a job for the sake of doing a job," Scully says. "What I try to instill in my staff is the big picture. You aren't just

cutting grass. You aren't just raking a bunker. What's the big picture?"

One of those moments of truth comes down to what members and guests see when they come onto the property, Scully says.

"I empower my staff to make them feel they're directly responsible for how great this property is," he says. "It has nothing to do with me. I'm just the one who puts all the puzzle pieces together. They're the ones who go out and do all the work every day, and they're the ones members appreciate and love." **GCI**

David McPherson is a freelance writer based in Toronto.

PENN STATE | ONLINE

Learn from a leader in turfgrass education

Bachelor's Degree in Turfgrass Science Certificates in Turfgrass Management

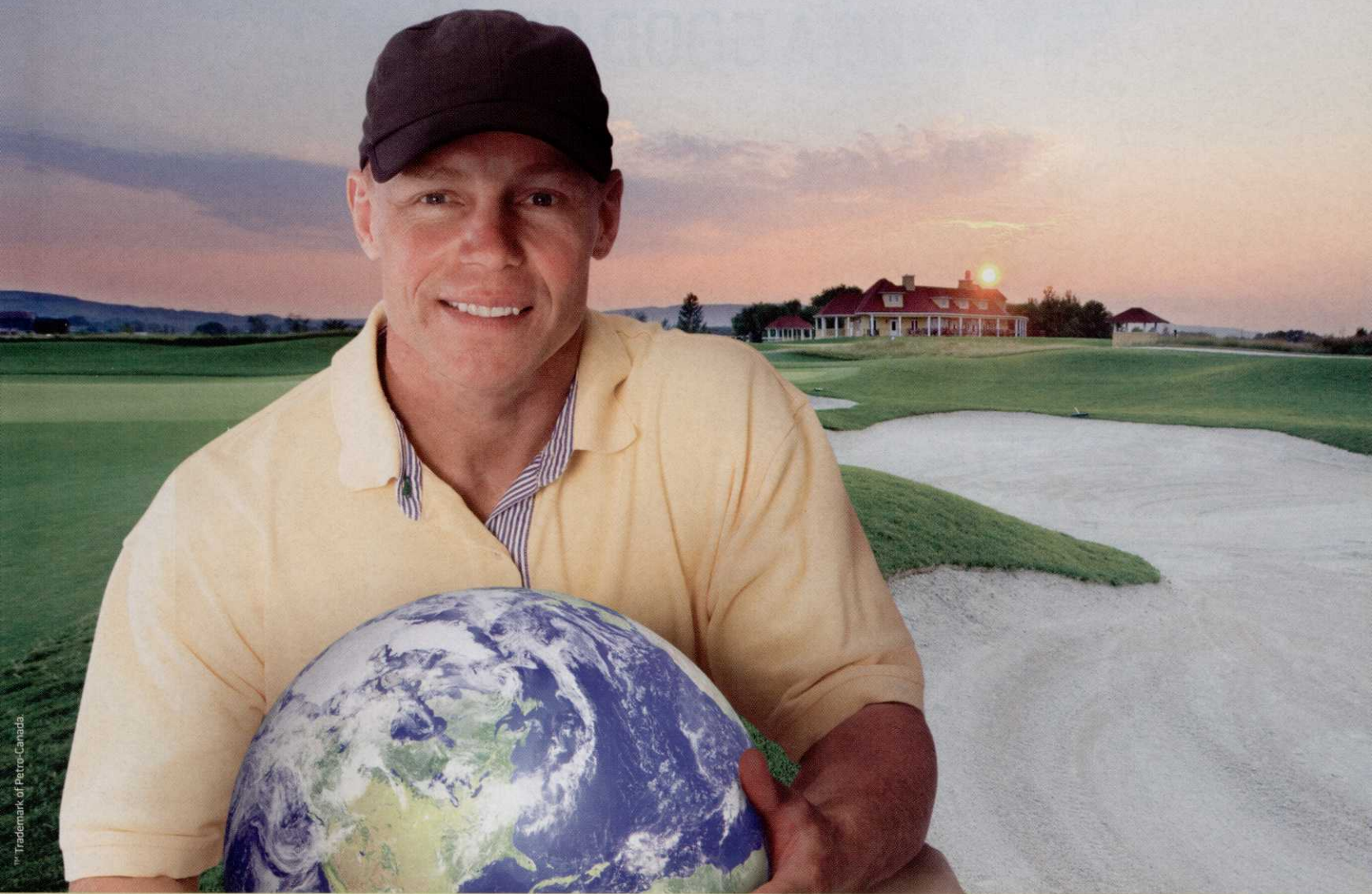
- Employer-recognized and accredited
- Flexible, convenient, and entirely online
- Financial aid options available



www.worldcampus.psu.edu/GCI

U.Ed.OUT 08-0859bkh/yjw

WE'RE CHANGING THE GAME. FOR THE BETTER.



Introducing CIVITAS™ – a breakthrough in fungus control technology.

Turn on the natural defenses of your turf and drive away fungus.

CIVITAS is unlike any other fungicide you've ever used. That's because – unlike conventional chemistry – CIVITAS does not kill anything. Its unique mode of action activates the natural defenses of your turf enabling it to effectively defend itself against dollar spot, brown patch, anthracnose, snow mold and other fungi. Without the resistance headaches. Embrace CIVITAS and change your game for the better.

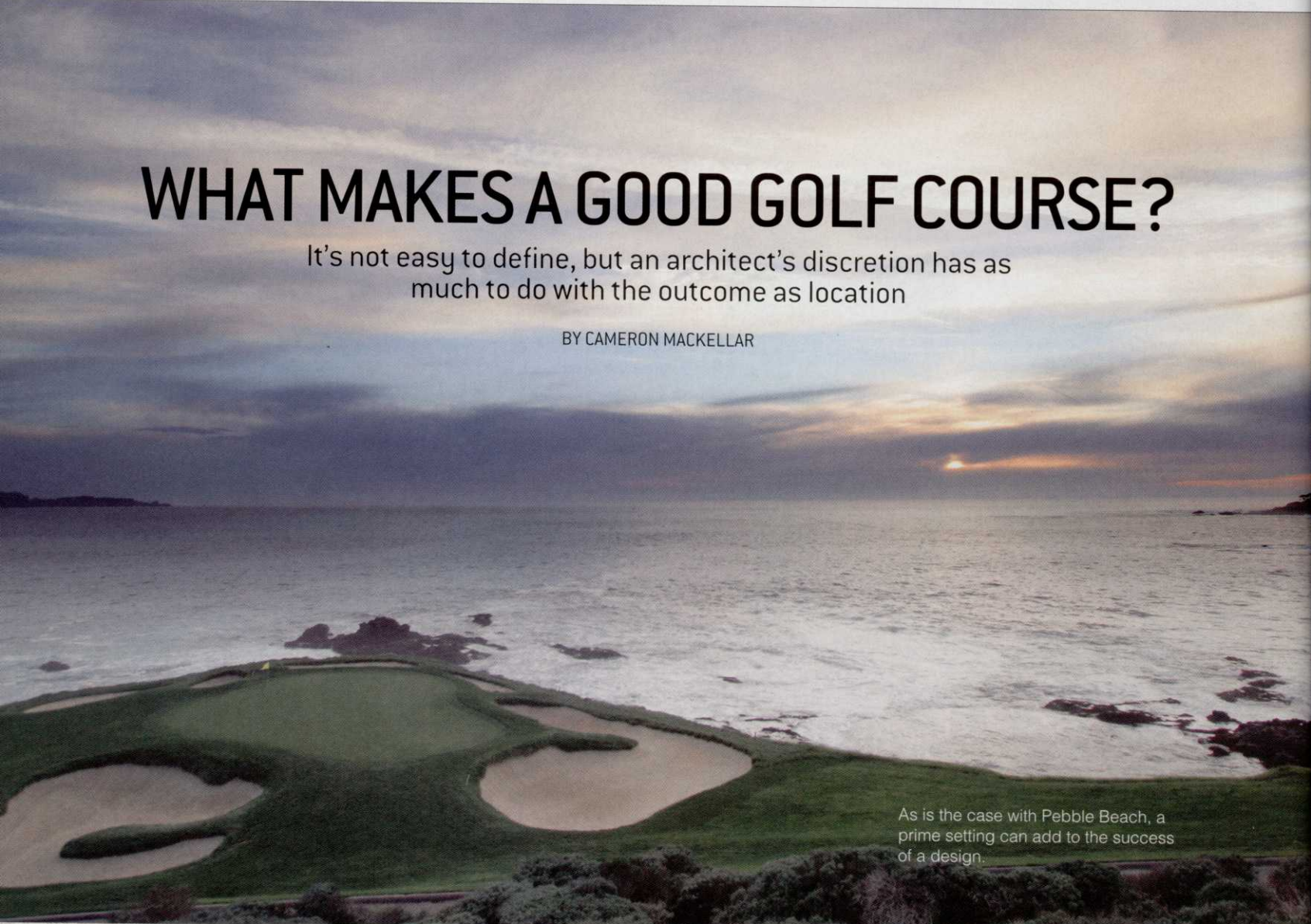


changing the game

WHAT MAKES A GOOD GOLF COURSE?

It's not easy to define, but an architect's discretion has as much to do with the outcome as location

BY CAMERON MACKELLAR



As is the case with Pebble Beach, a prime setting can add to the success of a design.

To paraphrase an old saying, "I can't define good golf course architecture, but I know it when I see it." This comment reveals how difficult it can be to define the merits of a good golf course.

What is it that destines a course to be considered a top 100 or even an example of good golf course architecture? Is it the setting (Pebble Beach)? Is it the beauty (Augusta National)? Is it the challenge (Pine Valley)? All magazine rankings aside, there must be a reasonably objective framework that distinguishes a well-designed golf course. For those of us in this profession, the basic principles of golf course design are fairly evident, or they should be.

Is the success of a design the result of following the basic principles and applying them to

each current project? Simply put, yes. However, as in the game of golf, there lies the rub of golf course design. Assembling these principles to create an original, quality playing field, while dealing with unforeseen conditions and ambiguous details that the books rarely mention, is the challenge. Countless choices must be made. Each architect – whether it's A.W. Tillinghast, Alister MacKenzie, Pete Dye, Robert Trent Jones Jr., Tom Fazio or Tom Doak – has a signature framework with which he assembles the choices that determine the golf experience.

PROVIDING A PERSONALITY

Golf is like no other sport. The dimensions and characteristics of an individual golf course change from day to day, week to week and

throughout the span of its lifetime. And the differences between golf courses are infinite. Like human beings, each is separate and unique with distinct personalities and characteristics. Each reacts to different golfers, varied weather or different times of the year.

An average golfer sees the course as a sequence of par 3s, 4s and 5s that total a par of about 72. Tee locations, green sizes, depth of bunkers, turf types and water hazards provide the personality of a golf course. That personality is the result of the architect's vision. Generally, golfers can sense the atmosphere of the golf course or feel the dread of a hazard but rarely understand why.

A good architect will use existing site features to develop the character and flavor of the course.

Some Heads You Want...



Much like a good meal or enjoyable music, the strategic, visual and textural golf experience lingers with a golfer long after the event, leaving him fulfilled and satisfied, neither wanting nor overwhelmed. A golf course is the product of an architect's ability to integrate his artistic creativity, scientific knowledge and golf acumen into the landscape.

THE ART OF COURSE DESIGN

A golf course should be considered a work of art because it has a unique and discernible theme, structure and style. Artistic design theory is one of the reservoirs of knowledge from which an architect draws. Unity and variety; line, form and color; scale and composition; foreground and background are all considerations of the designer. However, a work of art must be composed within the framework of golf theater.

The trick is to make the parts fit the whole. An architect may have the desire to create a feature to enhance the aesthetic of the golf landscape or the challenge and playability of a particular golf hole. It's easy enough to have good, solid, individual ideas, but the real challenge is creating a coherent, well-integrated experience. Taking clues from the site and its surrounds makes an architect's job more effective, efficient and inspirational.

THE ROUTING PLAN

Great golf courses are the result of positive landscape management. The aim is continuity of an experience. Robert Trent Jones Jr. said, "Like a good tailor, a routing plan must fit well to wear well. If it's cut wrong to begin with, the garment will never wear well."

The routing plan should reflect and expose the best of the site features without theatrics and convulsion. Golf holes should have variety, but also should feel like they belong within the family of 18. Changing bunker styles, drastic or distracting topographic features, inappropriate locations for water or improperly sized tee surfaces can ruin the aesthetic and systematically detract from the beauty of the golf experience. The outcome will be better if an idea springs from the landscape, rather than affixing an idea or image to it.

Site characteristics, client objectives and budget, and the target market will determine how a project will evolve. A larger budget will allow more bells and whistles. A great site dynamic will allow more efficient use of materials and a

better routing plan. Natural systems of the site such as woodlands, wetlands, floodplains and watercourses, will affect the physical layout (routing plan) of the golf course and the impact on the functional elements of the design.

CONSTANT STATE OF REFINEMENT

An architect is constantly gauging the site resources with the client's objectives and budget while offering plan and detail alternatives. An architect is in a constant state of plan refinement, seeking solutions and alternatives to reach the goals. Choices must be made, often dozens at a time, affecting the budget, strategy and function of a golf course.

For example, relocating a green by 30 yards may save thousands of dollars while adding to the golf experience. But, at the expense of a stand of mature oak trees, is it worth it? Adding a bunker may cost money, but it stimulates the golfing public visually and strategically. Should it be included? A water feature is proposed at a far corner of the site but offers little strategic or aesthetic value. Should it be constructed? The architect faces these and many other questions daily during design and construction.

Architects require a basic understanding of numerous related professions: Hydrology, drainage, agronomy, turfgrasses, physics, geometry, civil engineering, soil sciences, botany, psychology and natural systems are all part of the training. Decisions in each of these disciplines are linked inherently to other parts of the golf course, giving it its personality and life.

For example, existing soil conditions will determine the extent of drainage systems and soil amendment requirements. Weather patterns and topography will determine the necessity for irrigation requirements and turf types. Turf types will be determined by soil conditions and available water. Available water and a budget will determine grassing limits and the pumping station requirements. And so on.

The quality of a golf course is affected equally by the materials underground as it is by the visible portions of the facility.

DRAINAGE AND HYDROLOGY

If the maxim of real estate is location, location, location, then the maxim of golf course design is drainage, drainage, drainage. Poor hydrology can be the greatest shortcoming of a golf course. If the course lacks a sound drainage network, then, at worst, there will be areas of

standing water making the course unplayable, or at best, soil conditions that cause weak or diseased turf.

Quality drainage systems and shaping can never be compromised. The value of positive at grade drainage isn't measurable. Directing water to the appropriate locations for collection and ultimate release is generating a great deal of attention because of more stringent environmental factors and regulations.

These protective environmental issues have forced golf course architects to integrate golf holes into the landscape more sensitively. Wetlands, floodplains and mitigation are terms that are surfacing during design and development more regularly. While golf courses have been blamed for environmental problems in the past, on balance, golf has been an environmental benefit far more than a detriment. Golf courses can solve a host of environmental problems with buffer zones, stormwater management and wildlife habitat establishment.

EARTHWORK AND GRADING

As Ben Hogan once said, "It's in the dirt". To adequately create the features that must be created for greens, tees and bunkers, earth must be moved. All architects attempt to reduce the amount of mass earthwork (removal and placement) as much as possible. So, what's appropriate? What's good design? That's as tricky as a flop shot over a creek from a hardpan lie.

Earthwork movement should reflect the intent of the architect balanced by the site needs and landscape environment. A golf course architect has to assess earthwork quantities constantly to create a mound or raised area in one place to, in turn, create a hollow or swale in another place to balance the movement of earth, all the while making it look as natural as possible.

Furthermore, it's important to balance earthwork to smaller, adjacent areas to reduce hauling costs. An architect may be creating a low spot or pond in one area of a site, but, if that excavated earth has to be trucked to a far corner of the site, the balance of cut to fill is more costly.

Then there's the possibility that, when creating a depression in one area, an architect inadvertently causes a drainage problem (i.e., wet area on the golf course where water collects) and then must install underground drainage infrastructure, which also can prove costly. Again, shaping and grading must accomplish the direct golf-specific goals, while providing