

An open letter to a superintendent

The controversial opinions expressed in 'Confessions of a Superintendent' draw sharp rebuttal from New England

In rebuttal to "Confessions of a Superintendent" (April '68 GOLFDOM) signed Anonymous, I believe that when a professional person authors an article for a business magazine such as GOLFDOM or the GCSA of New England NEWSLETTER, then the writer should have enough backbone to sign his name.

After several readings of "Confessions of a Superintendent," it becomes apparent the author has tangled himself in an inescapable web.

To begin with, the entire spillover from "Anonymous's" heart paints a somewhat distorted picture of what we know as the average golf course superintendent. "Anonymous" should be treated in a manner just as he implies, an isolated case. And going further along those lines, his escapades on the job—which run a very suspicious gamut—could lead readers to believe that perhaps some of them are hand-tooled from fictitious sources.

There still remains some question as to his intended station in life. Would he rather become a professional and thus, qualify himself as a member of the "We Abuse Superintendents Club"? Would he prefer to be a green chairman and test the staying power of the superintendent? Or would he care to improve his financial and social position by moving up the ladder as a milk truck driver?

It is his inconsistency in presentation which prompts a certain amount of rebuttal. In one breath "Anonymous" states, "In the matter of salary, I would be the first to admit that any super with a fairly good job could no doubt find another job (say milk truck driver) and make more money." Then later on he reveals the average salary for a super in his area is \$10,000. Mind you, that figure is an average! It must also follow that the comparison of the two jobs is amusingly absurd. This is nothing against milkmen, but there should be inserted that there is a matter of skills involved.

"Anonymous" rambles on to a few other impractical inferences, pausing along the way for another isolated, individualistic slam at long hours. Once again he does not speak for the masses. Contrary to an old popular song, moonlight does not become the superintendent. The author has slipped away

from the established fact that today's superintendent is just as the title dictates, a salaried turf professional, engaged to supervise the conditioning of the golf course.

Another fallacious assertion in the confessional is that there exists a vendetta between the golf professional and the superintendent. Naturally, there always will be experienced differences of opinion between the two. However, in recent years there has been a move undertaken toward a finer tuning of the relationship between pro and super. A form of mutual respect has been created and nurtured by both parties.

The alleged idea of the superintendent ignoring the purpose of his place on the operational agenda of realizing a successful club and course also is deserving of argument. The mere fact that green chairmen and supers work hand in hand for the betterment of conditions is proof that the man's first concern is for the member at a club or player at a public course. Granted, there will be occasions of clash of personalities for this is only natural. But with the increased emphasis on the recognition of turf management as a profession, these differences are being lowered to a minimum.

The entire theme of this article also leaves an inaccurate taste in one's mouth. "Anonymous" takes a defensive stand all through the confession and tries to offset it with a negative approach.

In this day and age the golf course superintendent is sick and tired of hearing about the pitfalls of his profession. He has struggled zealously to eliminate most of them by upgrading the reputation of his very own presence in the game.

"Confessions of a Superintendent" does nothing to enhance the plight of the superintendent. It shall not make the best-seller list . . . at least not in our neck of the woods. We would trust the rest of the golf world feels the same.

Sincerely,

Anthony B. Caranci, Jr.
President
Golf Course Superintendents
Association of New England, Inc.