



GOLFDOM SPEAKS OUT

Our men on a tightrope

Life around the golf club and course is not necessarily a bed of roses, as many pros, superintendents and managers can attest. There are many cross-currents and conflicting desires pulling in different directions, oftentimes resulting in an unlivable situation. Occasionally, one of these situations comes to the surface and we try to find some lesson or reason in what has occurred.

Recently, we received a telephone call from a very serious and anxious member of a prominent club's greens committee. He was disturbed because at a meeting of his committee the night before, it was voted to fire the club's superintendent. He had voted for retaining the superintendent, but the majority voted for letting the man go.

Needless to say, we were fascinated and socked question after question at the man regarding the super, the job he had done and other pertinent data. Our fascination turned to shock and surprise when he informed us that the man had only been with the club one year and the firing had not come about because of a personality problem. How could a club tell anything about a man's performance in such a short period of time? The upshot of the matter seemed to be that performance had been a relatively minor factor in the decision. The committee felt it had good and considered reason, although the man had been there only one year, to let him go. By and large they exercised sound judgement, and yet we are confronted with what seems to be unfair action.

In so precarious a position, superintendents have often functioned against their better judgements rather than face the consequence of an irate committee. Somehow the greens committee didn't feel it was getting from the man what should be gotten from the man. However, on their side of the fence, what this should be was not clear in their own minds. The vote was divided, which indicates that some of the members were satisfied with the man's performance up to this point. The question then comes down to: Was it possible for any superintendent to please this committee and if so, would that person have been forced to do things against his better judgement?

This question has plagued superintendents, pros and managers alike for many years. The answer to such problems lies in better understanding among all groups and individuals responsible for running a club. It is indeed brought sharply home when a man is suddenly left without his livelihood after what, on the face of it, seems to be an inadequate trial period.

It is incumbent on both sides in club operation to find the means and methods of better understanding. Perhaps, if this is done before a situation precipitates itself, it can be resolved without the disturbing and unsatisfactory expedience of discharge.

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