

Shades Of Green

OPINION

The GCSAA recently released the results of its 2000 Golf Leadership Survey taken in February at the conference and show. Some of the answers to the non-technical questions were interesting, to say the least.

I laughed — a snicker, not a knee-slapping belly laugh — when I read the results of No. 29. The question reads: If you could play one round of golf in North America, where would it be?

The top five results are: (1) Augusta National, 36 percent; (2) Pebble Beach, 23 percent; (3) Cypress Point, 18 percent; (4) Pine Valley, 13 percent; (5) Pinehurst, 11 percent.

I snickered because irony abounds in that answer, given that superintendents battle the “Augusta National Syndrome” often at their own courses. How many gray hairs and ulcers have been experienced by superintendents who have endured the apples and oranges comparisons from their members about Augusta National conditions or television golf in general?

The sheer magnitude of the history at the Masters is enough of a draw to make superintendents want to play Augusta. I only know my game couldn't handle greens rolling 13 on level ground. As far as the conditioning syndrome, you can take your green chairman to a practice round and show him quickly why your course doesn't look like Augusta.

I've been to the Masters three times to check out golf's Shangri-la. Yes, it's totally awesome. No, I didn't get to close my home course for five months out of the year, install heating and cooling systems under the greens, place grow lights on greens at night, or increase my budget and crew size by 200 percent.

Another question that was mildly thought-provoking was the one asking which U. S. president of the last century would superintendents like to play a round of golf with. The top five answers are: (1) John F. Kennedy, 16 percent; (2) Dwight Eisenhower, 13 percent; (3) Ronald Reagan, 12 percent; (4) Theodore Roosevelt, 11 per-

Augusta: No. 1 With a Snicker

BY JOEL JACKSON



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cent; (5) a tie between George Bush and Bill Clinton, 8 percent.

Although there isn't much difference statistically between the rankings, I would juggle the lineup. Since I'm a war baby, I like Ike. My dream foursome would be Eisenhower, Bob Hope and Arnie. Yeah, I know — we're all Republicans.

As a college student in the 1960s, I too was energized by Kennedy's Camelot days and numbed by his assassination. A round with JFK would've been interesting. Maybe I could even have met Marilyn Monroe.

After watching several Bush interviews on A&E's *Biography*, *Charlie Rose* and *60 Minutes*, he moves up to third choice. Bush has shown more soul since he's been out of office. Also, a golf pro friend of mine sent Bush a Pole Kat putter, which he used.

At the risk of having Teddy Roosevelt shoot the wildlife on the golf course or turn the course into a national park, he moves into fourth place. Playing golf with this larger-than-life politician would just be “bully.”

I can't remember ever seeing Reagan with a golf club in his hands, so I don't know how he made the list. It must have been the trickle-down vote from the conservatives. Nevertheless, the Gipper moves into fifth place.

That leaves out Clinton. Sorry, they said to rank the top five. I loved it when Clinton played “Blueberry Hill” on the saxophone — but I hated it when he lied to us.

The real reason he doesn't make my foursome is that in golf, you're supposed to call the penalty on yourself.

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