

Suit Yourself

CLOTHES DON'T MAKE THE MAN – ABILITY DOES

By Mike Hamilton

I see more superintendents wearing suits and ties, and I'm perplexed. Does a suit and tie make that person a better superintendent, or is it a shield to hide his inadequacy? Let me answer this by telling you the story of my own employment history.

On the first day of my summer vacation when I was 16, my mother woke me at 6 a.m. "Get your lazy butt out of bed and go find a job," she said.



DYNAMIC GRAPHICS

I pulled on a pair of cut-off jeans, slid into my flip-flops and walked out the door. Once outside, I heard the sound of an engine coming from across the street. As I looked to see where the sound was coming from, I saw the golf course maintenance building there, and it occurred to me that a golf course was as good a place as any to get my first job.

As I approached the office, a well-dressed, well-groomed young man came out followed by the superintendent, who was shouting that the kid was the worst employee he ever had.

With my impeccable sense of timing, I asked the superintendent if he needed help.

"Do you have some real shoes?" he asked.

"Sure do," I replied — and that was the start of my golf course career.

I worked at that golf course until I got out of high school. After graduation, my boss told me I was the best employee he ever had and suggested I attend turf school.

Now let's flash forward 25 years to three years ago. I interviewed for a high-profile superintendent position and received permission to tour the golf course before I appeared before the green committee. Since I was not going to have time to change clothes, I wore my suit on the tour.

During my inspection of the equipment, I talked to the service technician who was backlapping a reel. When I squatted down so he could hear me, the reel snagged my tie and jerked me and my tie to the ground. As a result, I cut my chin and got lapping compound and blood on my white shirt. I cleaned myself up as much as possible and proceeded.

As I strolled in for my interview, the same well-dressed friend I had replaced at my first golf course walked out. He had on a three-piece Gucci suit, a gold watch and enough cologne to knock a buzzard off a garbage truck. He eyeballed me, laughed and said, "You've got no chance of getting this job — you look like you've been in a brawl."

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Quotable

"Professional Development Seminar."

— The description the American Association of Golf Course Architects used to describe daily golf outings during its four-day annual conference in Columbus, Ohio. The "seminars" included trips to famous courses such as Double Eagle GC, Scioto CC, The Golf Club and Muirfield Village GC.

"Jack Nicklaus has put a very large golden bear footprint on golf course architecture around the world."



— Golf course architect Rees Jones, presenting the American Society of Golf Course Architects' Donald Ross Award to Jack Nicklaus in May.

"I asked him the most important question that I think you could ask — if he had ever seen *Caddyshack*."

— Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura on his recent meeting with the Dalai Lama (WCCO Radio, Minneapolis)

No Course Is An Island



RUSS ANDORKA

As the remnants of Tropical Storm Allison dropped 36 inches of water on Houston, the Island Course (an appropriate name, under the circumstances) at Kingwood CC in Kingwood, Texas (a Houston suburb), found itself under water.