

**I** spotted the big shot shortly before the conference began. His face was tan and his hair was neat. The big shot walked the room wearing a light green shirt, a yellow tie and a dark green jacket.

But there wasn't exactly an aura to the big shot's presence. He didn't swagger, and he didn't preen. In fact, the big shot didn't *act* like a big shot at all.

He chatted pleasantly with attendees of the conference. He smiled broadly. When the conference began, the big shot took a seat in the back of the room. Clearly, he wanted to blend in with everyone else.

That's Jon Scott for you.

Make no mistake. In the world of golf course maintenance, Scott *is* a big shot. The 53-year-old holds the prominent title of vice president of agronomy for competitions for the PGA Tour. He's in charge of course preparation for the PGA Tour. It doesn't get much better than that.

On a recent spring day, members of the Northern Michigan Turf Managers Association (NMTMA) invited Scott to their spring meeting to present him with a prominent award — their Distinguished Service Award.

It was a homecoming for Scott, a native of Michigan, who also spent five years as superintendent at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme, Mich., from 1982-1987. Scott, who now "lives" in Ponte Vedra, Fla. (he spends about half the year on the road), says the time spent in northern Michigan as a superintendent marked a "pivotal point" in his career.

Like many superintendents looking to make strides in their careers, Scott moved around the country to gain experience and move up. He worked in the Carolinas, Florida, Maryland and Virginia. He spent a year at the prestigious Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville, Ky., before joining Golfturf/Nicklaus Design as an agronomist for nine years. That was his dream job, but Scott couldn't pass up the PGA post when it was offered to him 1998.

Scott could have waxed grandly about his career during his acceptance speech for the award, but that's not him. He stood courteously in front of the crowd on the green and purple

# You'd Never Know He's a Big Shot

BY LARRY AYLWARD



JON SCOTT COULD  
HAVE WAXED  
GRANDLY ABOUT HIS  
CAREER DURING HIS  
ACCEPTANCE  
SPEECH FOR THE  
AWARD, BUT THAT'S  
NOT HIM

floral carpeting decorating the modest Holiday Inn room. He clasped and unclasped his hands as he talked. His body language, as well as the pitch and tone of his soft-spoken voice, told of a humble man genuinely thankful for the award and his career.

Scott didn't talk about himself. He reminisced about his days as a member and past president of the NMTMA. He talked about all the people that took him under their wings to get him get where he is.

"How did I get here?" he asked. "I'm nobody special. How did I get here? I got here because of the people who helped me — *all* along the way."

Later in his speech, Scott said he reached a point a few years ago where he felt obliged to give back to the industry what it had given him. He says he's trying to do that by helping others realize their goals, much like the people who helped him realize his.

"I will carry that on until I get put in the box," he vowed.

At the end of his short speech, Scott bowed to the crowd and thanked them. It was clear he was bowing *to* them, not *at* them.

Scott's sincere speech moved Jeff Holmes, who presented the award to Scott. Holmes, certified superintendent of Egypt Valley Country Club, spent nearly two years as Scott's assistant at Grand Traverse.

"Obviously, Jon has spent some time thinking about the things he's been blessed with," Holmes said. "He realizes he didn't get to where he's at in his career by himself. That's pretty special — because a lot of people give themselves *all* the credit."

Don't ever call Scott a big shot. He won't believe you.

*Aylward, editor of Golfdom, can be reached at 440-891-2770 or laylward@advanstar.com.*