

**I**t's a busy week here at Lake Omigosh. The members are grumpy because the course is closed for one week to host the PGA's annual Orange Juice Open on the tour's Central Florida stop.

The event is viewed by some as the social event of the year, and others are miffed they can only play golf at the club 51 weeks a year, as if there weren't 149 other courses in the area they could play that week.

As for Duffy McDuffy and his crew, it means a week of double shifts with early-morning starts and late-night finishes and lots of prayers for good weather. A few of the local superintendents pitch in and volunteer to help out on the crew filling divots, raking bunkers and dragging the dew. Duffy and the club reciprocates with a golf outing and barbecue later in the summer when play slows down. Everyone has a good time; everyone except those pros who don't make the cut.

Of the 140 golfers teeing it up on Thursday morning, you'd think that half of them were playing a different golf course the way they complain about the conditions. The sad thing is the complaints and gripes made the headlines in the sports section of the paper even before the first ball was struck. There was talk that the course favors long hitters, that the greens are too firm, that the fairways are too soft, and on and on.

You can identify the complainers easily. Just look at the scores on the leaderboard. Guys who shoot over par are dishing the course in the press tent, calling for cows, corn and dynamite to make improvements.

Meanwhile, for the four dozen pros who shot minus 3 to minus 8 for the day, the course they were playing didn't seem to be in such bad shape. Not that they said so. "Well I hit my irons good all day and I was lucky to make some long putts," was a common refrain.

### Squeaky wheels

It reminded me of the time Duffy told me about playing golf on Men's Day: "You should have heard them in the grill after the round," he said. "It seems I had three sets of greens out

# Tournament Tales from Lake Omigosh

BY JOEL JACKSON



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there: too fast, too slow and just right. The 'just right' teams came in first and second."

I tried to console Duffy by reminding him he couldn't please everyone all the time. But he sighed and said, "Yeah, but the squeaky wheel gets the attention because it makes so much noise! If any of those guys get on the green committee, I'll be in for it."

As for the 2004 Orange Juice Open, the world-ranked contenders hit the ball too many times into bunkers, hazards and out of bounds, which is not a course conditioning problem.

Some young pro who hit the most fairways and greens in regulation and by luck or skill made most of his putts took home the winner's check. The fans applauded the skill and luck. The media yawned at the unknown winner and wrote as much or more about who lost instead of who won. The club members were just happy that the corporate tents were folding so they could get their course back.

### Oh, by the way, nice job

Duffy and his crew got their 15 seconds of recognition for all the hard work when the TV announcer mentioned that they had the course in good shape for the tournament.

Come Monday, Duffy and his crew will begin cutting down those ankle-deep roughs and repairing a couple of acres of divots and dirt on the par-3 tees, fairway landing areas and driving range. The hackers will tee it up from the tips and pretend to be Tiger and the greens will be too fast, too slow and just right once again.

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