

You've heard the horror stories about the pompous green chairmen who think they know it all when it comes to golf course maintenance. Never mind that these Judge Smails types don't know *Poa annua* from a push mower. These guys *think* they know it all, and that's all that matters to them.

And then there's David Shaw, the mild-mannered green chairman of the Country Club of Orlando. Shaw will be the first to tell you that he doesn't know it all — or even close to it all — about turf maintenance. But like an eager-to-learn college kid, Shaw will also tell you that he's trying to learn more about turf management by reading trade magazines like *Golfdom* because he knows being informed can only aid him in his role as green chairman.

Shaw is genuine when he says he wants to understand the plight of superintendents and turf workers in their ongoing battle against the mighty Mother Nature to maintain healthy turf.

Is this guy a dream green chairman or what? And it gets better.

Shaw sincerely appreciates when superintendents and their crews shed their blood, sweat and tears. We know this because we've heard stories about how Shaw *shows* his appreciation.

Brian Poorman, the assistant superintendent at the Country Club of Orlando, relates a story about how Shaw showed his gratitude for the maintenance staff's hard work a few years ago after the crew helped stage a successful member-guest tournament. After the event, Shaw sent a limousine to pick up Poorman, the course's superintendent and two other core staff members and took them out for a steak dinner.

"David is a down-to-earth guy," Poorman says. "He tells me, 'I'm here to help you be successful.'"

That's Shaw's mantra. He believes that in order for one to be successful, he or she must help others be successful.

Wait, the dream gets even better.

You've heard the stories about green chair-

Green Chairman Is the Real Deal

BY LARRY AYLWARD



DAVID SHAW

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men who impose a my-way-or-the-highway doctrine when it comes to running the golf course. Well, get this: Shaw is a listener. He'll look you in the eyes and hear what you have to say. And he'll take what you have to say into consideration when making a decision he hopes is good for all.

Some superintendents might feel threatened to know their green chairmen are reading turf pubs to keep up on industry trends and technicalities. But not Steve Money, who joined the Country Club of Orlando as its superintendent last spring. He likes that Shaw feels a need to be educated so he understands where Money is coming from when talking turf.

"He's a very detailed person, and he always wants to know the details of what you're doing," Money says. "He keeps things moving forward."

There's a fine line between being hands-on and hands-off. Shaw has negotiated that territory carefully — he's involved, but he's not overbearing.

"I would describe David Shaw as a model green chairman," says Jim Ellison, vice president of agronomy and golf course maintenance for Arnold Palmer Golf, who has consulted at the Country Club of Orlando for the past few years. "He asks questions and takes input."

Shaw, a mechanical engineer who owns his own commercial services and contracting company, sounds like a football coach when he says: "You just have to get the right people on the bus. If you do that, it's easy to stay out of their way."

True, but you also have to know when to stay out of those people's way. Some authorities just don't get that. "Meddling" is their middle name.

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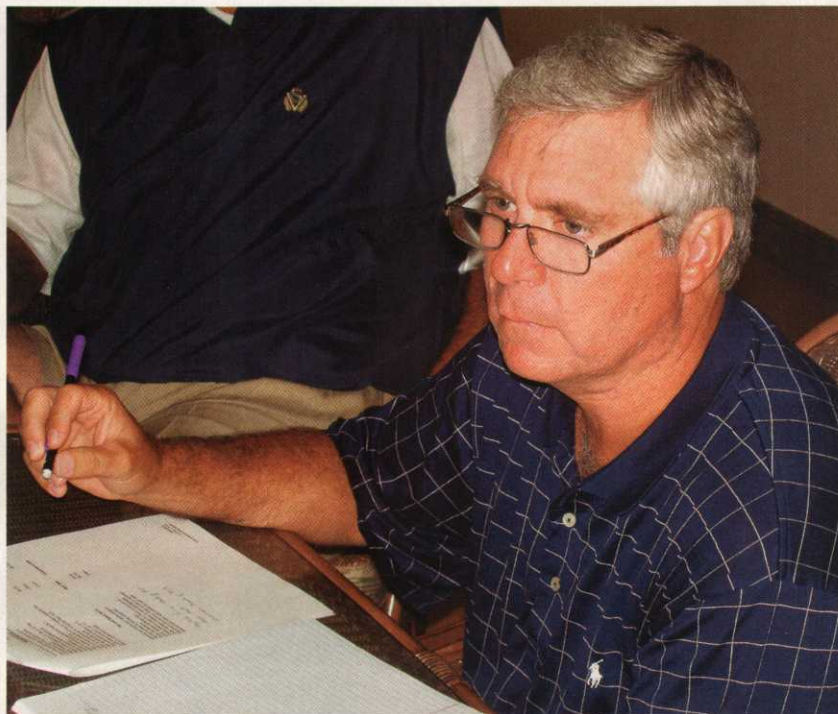
The gravelly voiced Shaw, in his fourth year as green chairman, says the responsibility he holds for his post has more to do with his passion for the club than his desire to wield power.

"This is our second home," the 47-year-old Shaw says of himself and his wife and two children. "We love it here."

Jerry Valone, the club's general manager, jokes that people are already chanting "four more years" in reference to Shaw taking on another term as green chairman.

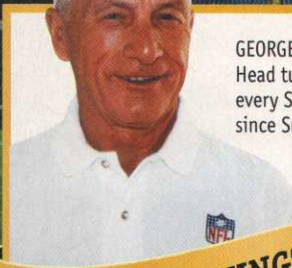
If it were an election, you can bet Shaw would garner the majority vote of the golf course maintenance staff.

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LARRY AYLWARD

David Shaw, the mild-mannered green chairman of the Country Club of Orlando, conducts a green committee meeting last November. Shaw is the type of leader who likes to ask others, "What do you think?"



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