

**W**ith the onset of spring and the anticipation of the coming summer, I thought it would be a good idea for us to all gather around and work on our games a little bit.

These long, tedious winter months can really take a toll on us, turning our brains to mush. Springtime is a great time to dust off the cobwebs and get back in the groove. So we're going to go over some fundamentals to get our games back on track.

All right now, I can hear all of you moaning out there, and I can see your eyes rolling back in your heads. But bear with me for a few moments. We could all use a little refresher course before setting out again. So let's review the basics, shall we?

**Rule #1 – Keep your eye on the ball.** Stay focused, plan and prioritize. There is never a time when you should stop learning about your craft — so read, study, ask questions, talk to peers. Your industry contacts will be your most valuable asset.

**Rule #2 – Keep your head down.** Stay on this current task and finish it completely before worrying about the next one. Sometimes we tend to get ahead of ourselves. We tell ourselves, "It doesn't matter what I'm doing, I really feel I should be doing something else."

If your priorities are clear and set, then you'll have the confidence to finish one thing before starting another.

And beware of the questioners around you. There will always be people who doubt that what you're doing is the right thing and that you should be doing it their ways. Don't let them influence you or cause you to look up and lose sight of your own priorities.

**Rule #3 – Employ a proper grip.** Your staff is your lifeline to success — for you, for them and for your facility. Train well, communicate effectively and always be fair. If you show favoritism, you will lose respect. Be firm but have compassion. These are people working for you — fellow humans. Respect them as well.

**Rule #4 – Have the right equipment for your game.** Knowing your limitations can be a real plus

## Ode to Springtime: Get Back to Basics

BY JIM BLACK



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when it comes to maintaining your course. If you don't have the right equipment for your intended project, your outcome will suffer. Stay within your means. Sometimes you have to realize you can only do so much with what you have to work with.

**Rule #5 – Follow through.** Always be able to do what you say you're going to do. This way you won't create any doubts about your credibility. Setting boundaries and knowing when to say "no" is just as important as saying "yes" and doing what is asked. Surprisingly, too, you'll gain respect.

**Rule #6 – Golf was meant for walking.** Some of the working days I most regret are those days when I don't have the chance to see the whole golf course. We should all take the time to inspect the entire playing field on a daily basis — on foot, if possible.

It not only will do you some good in body and mind, it will help put you in the perspective of your customers. I am always amazed at the things I see walking the course that I never would have seen were I zipping by in a golf car.

Like the game of golf itself, golf course management is most effective if we work on and hone the fundamental skills necessary to succeed. The summer of 2005 is bearing down on us like a freight train, and it may take everything you've got in your bag of tricks to make it through to the other side with flying green colors. Be ready. Know your basics and refer to them if the going gets tough.

OK, pep talk's over. Now quit your whining and get out there.

There are a lot of people counting on your success.

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