

It's been a busy summer already here at the Lake Omigosh Country Club located in central Florida. Hurricane season wasn't even two weeks old when Hurricane Alberto nearly roared ashore in the Big Bend area where Florida takes a hard left turn to the west and steals the beaches from south Georgia and Alabama. Fortunately, no major damage was done.

I ran into our superintendent Duffy McDuffy the other day on the golf course. The course looked good to me and the greens were rolling smooth and medium fast, but Duffy had a harried look on his face as he drove up. "Hey Duffy, how's it going? The course looks great!" I said truthfully. Duffy smiled weakly and said, "Thanks. We try. To tell you the truth, the weather has been so weird between the storms and then hot and dry, it's enough to drive a body to drink! These days they should count a superintendent's time on a golf course in dog years."

"It's that bad?" I asked. "Oh, you know us supers," he replied. "We are our own worst critics and worrywarts when it comes to course conditions and reacting to all the 'what ifs' of growing grass in today's politically correct world. I just get worn out trying to please all the members and fighting city hall over water, fertilizer and pesticide non-issues that get all blown out of proportion by the media and a few cockeyed do-gooders."

Unfortunately, I knew Duffy's frustrations had been building up by the talk going around the 19th Hole and Whine Bar. It seems Duffy's normally polite and professional demeanor had given away to some snappy sarcastic comebacks in conversations with some of the members lately.

For example, Gordon Goodnight had been harping for a couple of weeks on how our greens weren't as fast as those over at the Kwitzyerbellyakin Country Club down the road. One day last week he asked Duffy, "How fast are the greens running today?" Duffy barked, "Well let's just say that with your slow play, you can't catch them."

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Superintendents Are Only Human

BY JOEL JACKSON



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posting Stimpmeter readings in meters instead of feet. Some days when he was really upset he used centimeters. The greens still rolled as good as usual but it caused quite a stir as the members had no idea what the real green speed was, which was Duffy's point all along.

When the subject of concerns over bunker consistency came up at a recent green committee meeting, Duffy snapped back, "It's a hazard for Pete's sake. Are you planning on holding a sand sculpting contest with sand castles or something that I don't know about?" Then he went too far when he added, "If you are so worried about hazard consistency, I'm surprised you haven't asked me to raise or lower the lake levels daily or prune all the trees in the woods up to the height of your backswings."

Duffy didn't reserve his frustration just for the members. Word got out that a couple of his new employees were having problems getting to work on time. Reportedly he told his assistant Archie Clark, "Arch, the next time those guys are late, give them their paychecks a date late."

Duffy apologized to one and all for his moments of insanity and it dawned on me how often we take him and his crew for granted as they give us such a great course to play on day after day through all sorts of adversity — environmental, economical and political.

So long from the Lake Omigosh Golf Club where the superintendent is only human after all, the crew tries hard and the members are about par for the course.

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