

# Shades Of Green

■ OPINION

**T**he weather has been miserable here at the Lake Omigosh Golf Club in central Florida. One course nearby reported 60 inches of rain this summer, and we've been setting record-high temperatures in October. Superintendent Duffy McDuffy joked in the 19th Hole Grill & Whine Bar the other day that golf course maintenance can be like a reality TV show. For example:

## Survivor: Bentgrass in Florida

Lake Omigosh and 10 to 12 other golf courses were planted with Penncross bentgrass in the mid-1980s. None of the turf survived. The Penn-cross also caused poor health. The first superintendent at Lake Omigosh collapsed one summer, and the second one had a heart attack. They wisely converted to bermudagrass shortly thereafter, following the old adage: right plant, right place. Only one course on the East Coast that closes from June to October grows a mono-stand of one of the new L-series bentgrasses year-round.

## Fear Factor: Seeds of Doubt

When it comes time to renovate, there is often a lot of pressure to select one of the new varieties of ultradwarf bermudagrass and/or seashore paspalum. Each grass at each location has its own particular requirements, including mowing equipment, mowing frequency, verticutting frequency, topdressing, liquid fertilizer, fungicide applications, growth regulator applications, aeration frequency, spiking and rolling. These learning curves might take a superintendent out of his comfort zone. McDuffy acknowledged that peers in the Frostbelt faced the similar unknowns when converting to the new bentgrass varieties or going from bent to *Poa* and vice versa. I think McDuffy also mumbled something like "kikuyu," and I said, "God bless you!"

## The Amazing Race: Special Events

Like runners in a marathon, superintendents must pace themselves or face burnout when dealing with everything from a grow-in and grand opening or a special event like a member-guest, club championship, state or local amateur championship or a PGA Tour event. Like a good run-

# Finally, Some TV Worth Watching

BY JOEL JACKSON



SUPERINTENDENT  
OR REALITY SHOW  
CONTESTANT?  
TOO CLOSE TO CALL

ner, a good superintendent knows how the course is laid out. The big unknown is the weather. A runner can win with the relative fastest time compared with others. A superintendent only has one shot at victory, which is measured by the fulfillment of expectations and specifications on a given day. When weather disasters strike, the resourcefulness and adaptability of superintendents and their crews are tested to the max.

## The Iron Chef: Sharpen your Blades

In keeping with the current trend of supporting equipment technician associations around the state, 12 equipment managers will be given a disassembled Toro Flex Mower in a box and have a timed competition to assemble it blindfolded. Part two will be a contest to see who can sharpen an 11-bladed Jacobsen reel with a hand-held file. That contest will not be done blindfolded.

## Cops: The Links Edition

The men and women of golf course maintenance filmed on location grooming the turf. Various episodes include: Golfers violating cart path rules; golfers hunting golf balls in protected environmental areas; failure to fix ball marks, divots or rake bunkers; golfers using the foot mashie; golfers hitting into maintenance workers; and maintenance workers hitting on cart girls.

## The Apprentice, Again

McDuffy said a lot of superintendents already have appeared on that show and heard the words, "You're Fired!"

So long from Lake Omigosh, where the superintendent is talented, the crew is hard working and the members are about par for the course.

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