

# From the Back Tees

■ OPINIONS ACROSS THE GAMUT

**H**appy New Year! New column title. New mug shot. But this column had to be submitted last November. So here's my auld lange syne to 2008:

**Birdie:** Smooth transition from Steve Mona to Mark Woodward as CEO of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

**Rub of the Green:** Mona stays in the golf industry and can continue to promote GCSAA as an industry leader.

**Handicap:** After being "one of the guys," certified superintendent Woodward now works for all us guys and gals. That's not always an easy transition. But I think his years of city government experience, including as the director of golf operations for the city of San Diego, will serve him well.

**Bogey:** LPGA invokes "Mandatory English" rule for all players.

**Rub of the Green:** Instead of being done proactively, it was done with a hammer.

**Handicap:** Due to negative public opinion, the LPGA had to reverse itself. Not a good confidence builder.

**Birdie Recovery:** LPGA works with GCSAA to gain a tour agronomist in John Miller, a certified superintendent from Ohio.

**Rub of the Green:** LPGA players and officials at the 2008 PGA Merchandise Show were more than pleased with the prospects of more consistent playing conditions at their tournament sites.

**Handicap:** Dealing with possible changes at these sites.

**Birdie:** Drafting more tournament players onto the GCSAA's Environmental Institute of Golf team (Vijay Singh and Sergio, Garcia for example). We need stars speaking out about the positives of golf and the environment. Kudos to Greg Norman and Lorena Ochoa for giving public kudos to superintendents.

## Birdies and Bogies On a Tour of 2008

BY JOEL JACKSON



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**Rub of the Green:** Tigers are endangered species. They should be more involved. That would be a roar heard round the world.

**Handicap:** Taking a stand contrary to the public perception (perceived reality) makes corporate America nervous. They don't want their pro-player spokespersons becoming targets for tree huggers.

**Bogey:** The Environmental Protection Agency's handling of the methyl bromide phase out under the Montreal Accord. The EPA has been forcing deeper and faster cutbacks in production and stockpile access than called for by law. This is forcing golf and turfgrass use of methyl bromide out of the picture before a safe, viable alternative can be developed, which was also a stipulation in the Montreal Accord that EPA chose to ignore.

**Rub of the Green:** The International Committee allows other countries to use methyl bromide to grow in golf courses because it's a critical need. But somehow the science stops at the U.S. border. Qué pasa?

**Birdie Finish:** A salute to Annika Sorenstam on her stellar career with the LPGA. It's not a stretch to say she was a tigress in her own part of the jungle out there.

**Rub of the Green:** She will still be involved in golf and a good ambassador for the game.

**Handicap:** I just hope this isn't a Brett Favre-like retirement.

Now it's time to tee it up for 2009.

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*Certified Superintendent Joel Jackson retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.*