

It's Super-intendent!

The incredible stories of Doug Higgins and Bruce Nelson got me thinking: It's time for a comic-book superhero based on the deeds of golf course superintendents.

My working title is "Superman."
Oh, wait, that's taken.

Hmmm . . . how about GolfCourse-ManagerMan? DirectorOfGrounds-Man? OK, so we have to collateralize the branding and default swap the platform, as the MBAs running Hollywood might say.

But first, the back stories on Higgins and Nelson.

Higgins, superintendent of Regatta Bay Golf Club in Destin, Fla., was making his morning rounds on the course when he saw a car sinking in one of his golf course ponds. Higgins called 911, took off his shoes and jumped in the pond to rescue an elderly woman whose car was almost entirely submerged in the water.

"I was on the 16th hole, and I could hear tires squealing," Higgins told the Northwest Florida News. "The front door was too far in the water. I couldn't get it open. I was beating on the glass saying, 'Unlock your doors. Unlock your doors.'"

Eventually, the doors unlocked and Higgins had to go in through a back door, pulling the woman to safety.

Two months before that, but only recently revealed, Fox Hollow at Lake-wood (Colo.) Certified Superintendent Bruce Nelson was quietly fishing the South Platte River with his buddy, CJ, when they were startled by a woman screaming for help. The woman had just watched someone slip on an icy

LET'S CREATE A SUPERHERO BASED ON

DOUG HIGGINS AND BRUCE NELSON, THE TWO

SUPERINTENDENTS WHO RECENTLY SAVED LIVES

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



bank of the river. After about 20 minutes, Nelson found the man, who was unconscious and pinned between the sloping ice and a boulder. After Nelson risked life and limb to get to the badly injured man, he and CJ stabilized him, built a fire and waited until after night-fall when a search-and-rescue unit arrived to take the man away.

You see where I'm going here?

Sure, the awards, commendations and all that business about saving lives remains an essential part of Higgins' and Nelson's stories. But the L.A.-native in me says let's get these real-life heroes an agent. The golf industry needs its own stars, and we have the perfect role models for a golf course superintendent superhero series.

Cynics might say Hollywood will question how middle-aged men who deal with neurotic golfers and their silly requests could make for the next great comic book/action-hero series. (Translation: How will they put the coveted 9- to 15-year-old demographic in the seats?)

Well, we know the humor part is easy. Throw our Nelson/Higgins hero into any one of thousands of country clubs. By day, he hears pathetic whining about tee placement for the seniors mixed high-ball, only to be saving those distressed golfers by night. Here's the

pitch: "Batman" meets "Caddyshack" in the vein of "The Incredibles."

For the superhero outfit, I picture some cool green-stained white coveralls, manly rubber boots and a high-tech air mask. Granted, it's not sexy sounding and probably won't turn up on your doorstep next Halloween. I'm just giving the costume designers a starting point.

And you ask, what about the all important GolfCourseManagerMobile? I'm thinking some sort of converted golf car with a mangy-looking spray rig, oversized mowing reels and a huge clippings fan to blow the bad guys into outer space. Memo to mower manufacturers: Get to work on a prototype. Chop, chop!

If my pitch works, superintendents will finally have an icon to put the Carl Spackler image to rest. Kids will want to be superintendents and members will stop talking down to their man for fear they may need him to save the world. (Well, I know the kids' part will happen.)

And if Hollywood doesn't buy in? We still have Higgins and Nelson to thank for being true heroes and genuine icons of the industry.

Here's to their heroism.

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