

**I**t has been a long, cold and wet winter here at the Lake Omigosh Golf Club in central Florida. Spring began arriving in late March with weekly rainstorms and cool snaps. I was out playing a quick nine holes before retreating to my office to work on my new book, “Doing Less with Less in a Globally Cooling Economy!”

Halfway through my round, I ran into our golf course superintendent Duffy McDuffy, who was setting cups, moving the tee markers and emptying trash cans, a job he inherited since he had to lay off several crew members due to budget cutbacks. When he saw me on the fifth hole, he came over to greet me like he does with most members.

“How are the greens rolling,” he asked? “Too fast for this old hacker,” I replied. He laughed and said, “Well, one thing is for sure about this cold weather, we can give you guys some fast greens.”

He said he would love to be mowing more grass instead of moving traffic-control ropes. Duffy also said, “Environmental stewardship aside, golf courses in Florida in March were meant to be green and not brown and gray. At least that’s what the snowbirds from up North tell me as they top their fairway shots off these tight lies.”

Given that our migrating snowbirds and the rest of their flock up North had endured record blizzards and flooding this past winter, you’d think just being able to be outside playing golf at all would be a plus. But I’ve found over the years as green chairman at Lake Omigosh that too often golfers have short-term memories and forget that Southern courses also had the worst winter in decades.

Bad weather and a bad economy are a one-two punch for most golf clubs these days. Frills need to be put on the shelf in favor of the basics, and Mother Nature will let the turfgrass know when it can grow again.

Members of Congress could learn from superintendents about how to cut spending and still get the job done and keep the customers reasonably satisfied. Of course, the customers also need to understand that there’s less money to spend for the extra flower beds, cart

## Livin’ in the Real Golf World

BY JOEL JACKSON



MEMBERS OF

CONGRESS COULD

LEARN FROM

SUPERINTENDENTS

ABOUT HOW TO CUT

SPENDING AND STILL

GET THE JOB DONE

path edging and all those other things that are pretty but have nothing to do with playing the game.

By the way, all you golfers out there that like to carp about current course conditions, you need to remember that fixing ball marks, raking bunkers and filling divots is your responsibility — regardless of membership dues, greens fees or your Dunn & Bradstreet rating. It’s been part and parcel of the etiquette and traditions of golf, just like not talking during someone’s backswing or playing the away ball first.

Then there’s the club down the street where one official wants to cut expenses and another can’t understand why the course isn’t perfect every day. They both talk to the superintendent and tell them what they want, but they don’t talk to each other. The result is a frustrated superintendent who is caught in the middle. Good, clear communication is more critical now as “Golf Normal” is being redefined by factors often beyond the club’s control.

Being caught in the middle isn’t new to superintendents, but it’s an impossible position if the club’s leadership can’t even agree on a common goal, direction or maintenance standard that fits a facility’s current financial situation.

Superintendents can give a club a list of options based on the resources provided, but smaller crews, old equipment, and fewer fertilizer and chemical applications can’t produce the same results as before.

Those unwilling to adjust their demands into reasonable expectations under the circumstances are only destined to make life miserable for themselves and others.

---

*Certified Superintendent Joel Jackson is executive director of the Florida GCSA.*