

I've been around long enough to know that the elephant missing in the parade of support for the golf course industry has been the golfers themselves.

Many courses budget dues, education and travel for their superintendents, but that support shrivels up in hard times or with changing club management and committee chairs. Clubs that understand and support superintendent education and involvement "get it," and the course conditions and maintenance department efficiency usually reflect that attitude.

How do we get golfers involved? Kudos to the Carolinas GCSA for developing and making the original Rounds 4 Research program such a huge fundraising success, so much so that chapters across the county clamored to get on board. The demand was such that the Carolinas group finally turned to the GCSAA to administer the program nationally, and the first year rollout is happening as I write this.

I like the program because it's a win-win way for clubs to donate rounds for online auctions and golfers to bid on them, with 80 percent of the proceeds going back to the chapters named on the donor forms.

And let's be realistic, it will be the more exclusive, hard-to-get-on clubs that will draw top-dollar bidding. But all courses need to participate.

The ball is in the superintendent's court to bring the program to his golf pro and general manager — and to get them to donate a round for the online auctions. Conversely, golfers must understand that turf management at all levels nationally is under attack by well-funded activists, and if the golf industry doesn't have adequate funding itself for research, education and advocacy, playing conditions can suffer.

Recent examples include EPA's Numeric Nutrient Criteria, the NPDES permit and Canada's banning pesticides for "aesthetic purposes." Is a smooth rolling putting surface an aesthetic purpose? Turf health and performance go hand in hand with appearance, so the law doesn't make sound scientific sense. It's a radical reaction to pesticides. We all know that, but how do we make our case without adequate funding?

Cheers to Rounds 4 Research

BY JOEL JACKSON



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Chemical and fertilizer companies already spend a lot of money developing products that must pass rigorous EPA requirements for use on turf. Plus, they already financially support the GCSAA and state and local chapters with sponsorship and advertising funds. It's time for the end users — the professional golfers, elite amateur golfers and all golfers in general — to step up.

Rounds 4 Research is a voluntary way for all golfers to compete for a tee time on a course they might not otherwise get to play. And the slate of courses need not be all exclusive member-only facilities. Resorts and semi-private courses can toss their hats in the ring and donate rounds for the competitive auctions.

Please log on to gcsaa.org and download the information that contains tips and forms to use in signing up your course for this very worthwhile fundraising program.

Thanks to the Carolinas GCSA for developing such a great interactive fundraising vehicle. Please note that it was able to raise over \$320,000 for turf research and education efforts for North and South Carolina universities. Just imagine what your state and the GCSAA could accomplish with those kinds of funds on a national level.

I feel that funds should naturally go to state university projects, as well as to the GCSAA's EIFG program, which has blazed a bold path toward getting national recognition for Golf's Drive Toward Sustainability. And never forget GCSAA's presence in Washington; it's in constant contact with EPA and Congress on our behalf.

Get your course signed up today!

Certified superintendent Joel Jackson is Executive Director of the Florida GCSA.