

FOUR MORE YEARS

With the re-election of Barack Obama, readers are concerned that these next four years will be tough ones for the economy of golf.

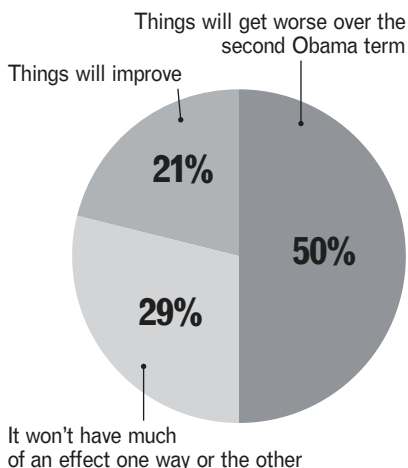
BY SETH JONES

"I look at these next four years about the same as I look at hitting a 230-yard 3-wood into high wind... it could turn out really good, but it probably isn't going to," laughs Anthony Williams, CGCS at the 36-hole Stone Mountain (Ga.) Golf Club.

Golfdom's readers seem to agree with the magazine's environmental editor. Half of those surveyed said they expected the next four years to be that 3-wood into the wind, while only 21 percent were feeling positive about the next four years.

"If we get good weather, we'll see more rounds played, but until everyone feels more comfortable about the economy and their personal situation, the golfers won't be as quick to get out here to play," Williams laments. "Ask the man on the street who is paying more in taxes; if he was a once-a-week golfer, he is now a once-a-month golfer."

HOW WILL FOUR MORE YEARS OF THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION AFFECT THE GOLF ECONOMY?



Still, there are those who remain positive about these next four years. Conrad Broussard, CGCS at the 81-hole St. James Plantation in Southport, N.C., which is entirely Audubon Certified, feels there may be an opportunity for golf under the Obama administration.

"He seems to be investing in the green industry heavily, and I think golf is more and more being seen as a green business," Broussard says. "Hopefully we can somehow use that to our advantage."

Golf course architect Tom Marzolf appreciates the fact that Obama is well known as a player of the game.

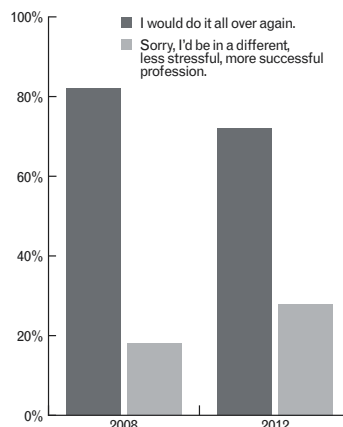
"My own perception is, he doesn't shy away from the game. He plays on vacation. I like the fact that he is not afraid to play the game and let it be a part of his life," he says. "I saw a show on the killing of Osama bin Laden — Obama played 9 holes on the day he told the team to go after (bin Laden) because he needed time to think. It's great that he utilizes the golf course as a place to make important decisions."

Almost 30 percent of readers surveyed said it doesn't make a difference who is in the White House. And you can bet most of that 30 percent expect these next four years to be tough ones. That's what Rhett Evans, CEO of the GCSAA, is preparing for.

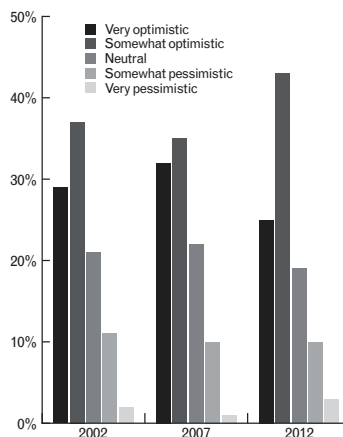
"I think the best way to sum it up is you're still going to see the status quo," Evans says. "With the democrats remaining in control, but the republicans in the House of Representatives, there will be a lot of debates, but they're just going to kick the can down the road with no real decisions."

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