

18th hole, Bay Hill Club & Lodge

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Hole of the

■ No. 16

Rum Pointe Seaside Golf Links
Berlin, Md.



Month

Margaritaville?

Singer/sailor Jimmy Buffett would love the 16th hole on Rum Pointe Seaside Golf Links, designed by the father-and-son architect team of Pete and P.B. Dye. Buffett would love the waste bunker that runs parallel to the shore of the Sinepuxent Bay. He'd love the abandoned boat that sits undisturbed in the desolate bunker. And, of course, he'd love the track's name.

But Buffett might not love playing the hole against a stiff Atlantic Ocean wind. When it's blowing, the par-4, 463-yard hole plays like it's 525 yards.

The Scottish-style links course features bentgrass greens and fairways. Joel McTavish, superintendent, says the 16th hole requires plenty of attention, thanks to the wind. The many mounds on the hole are sandy and require extra moisture. The east

side of the 7,000-square-foot green is difficult to irrigate because of sand blown on it from the shore.

"There's a lot of hand watering on this hole," McTavish says.

Golfdom's Hole of the Month is presented in partnership with:

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Does your life as a superintendent include: fresh air, plenty of sunshine, birds singing, squirrels and rabbits scampering about the grounds, a babbling brook flowing into the irrigation lake, unlimited golf, free clubhouse lunches *and* a company vehicle?

Or does this picture more accurately reflect your day: blistering heat or freezing cold, driving rain, dry wells and water restrictions, environmentalists screaming, media scurrying about looking for bad news, no time or desire for golf and another family event missed while attending to course demands.

In reality, the lives of most superintendents blend both lifestyles together. It takes a person with a strong constitution and a good sense of humor to balance the pleasure and pain of being a superintendent. The good days are godsend and the bad days ... well, sometimes they come in bunches and nibble at our psyches and bodies.

Take the following advice with a sprinkle of salt substitute from a former superintendent who had double bypass surgery when he was 49 years old and an angioplasty seven years later. Diet, exercise and regular physical examinations are the keystones to maintaining good health. Protect the health you have now so you don't end up paying for it later.

Protecting yourself now means taking 15 minutes in the morning on the Nordic Track or treadmill or simple stretching exercises and crunches to get the blood flowing to the brain. If you can't wait to get to the course, park your golf car and walk a few holes.

It means a banana or an apple or a bowl of cereal for breakfast rather than pancakes and bacon. You can always follow up the healthy food with a couple cups of coffee. Skip as many vending machine lunches/snacks as you can. If you have lunch privileges at the clubhouse, eat more salads and veggies.

I'm not saying you should crash diet, by any means, which causes health problems of its own. What I am suggesting is that you live by the old Greek adage: Everything in moderation.

Here's to Your Good Health

BY JOEL JACKSON



TAKE TIME NOW TO
INVEST IN GOOD
HABITS SO YOU CAN
BE AROUND TO
TAKE CARE OF
YOUR FAMILY AND
COURSE FOR A
LONG TIME

Reportedly, there is actual medicinal benefit in one or two drinks, but after that drinking becomes counterproductive. As for smoking, the first question the nurses asked me after my bypass surgery was, "Heavy smoker?" My answer was no, but their question should alert you to what they consider an important risk factor for heart disease, based on what comes across the operating table most often.

Since the sun is always with us, wearing sunscreen is common sense. Don't limit it to times when the sun is blazing. The dangerous UV rays can still penetrate your skin even when it's overcast.

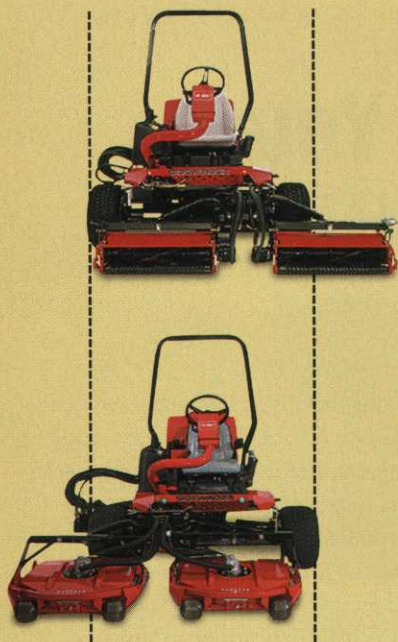
Skin cancer seems to be the No. 1 malady I've seen among my peers. Anyone working in an outdoor profession should have a skin cancer screening done annually, particularly because it's treatable when detected early.

If you choose not to protect yourself, how do you pay later? Payment comes in the form of a heart attack or a stroke and a 911 call you hope results in a happy ending. Or it is a chunk of your ear, your nose or your lung being lopped off to save the rest of your body from being taken over by the Big C.

On the mental side, I'll simply share this thought. We superintendents are, by nature, great worriers about our course conditions. I read an anonymous quote recently that sums up most of our attitudes succinctly: "Don't tell me worrying doesn't help. Most of the things I worry about never happen."

Take the time now to invest in good health habits, so you can be around to take care of your family and your golf course for a long time.

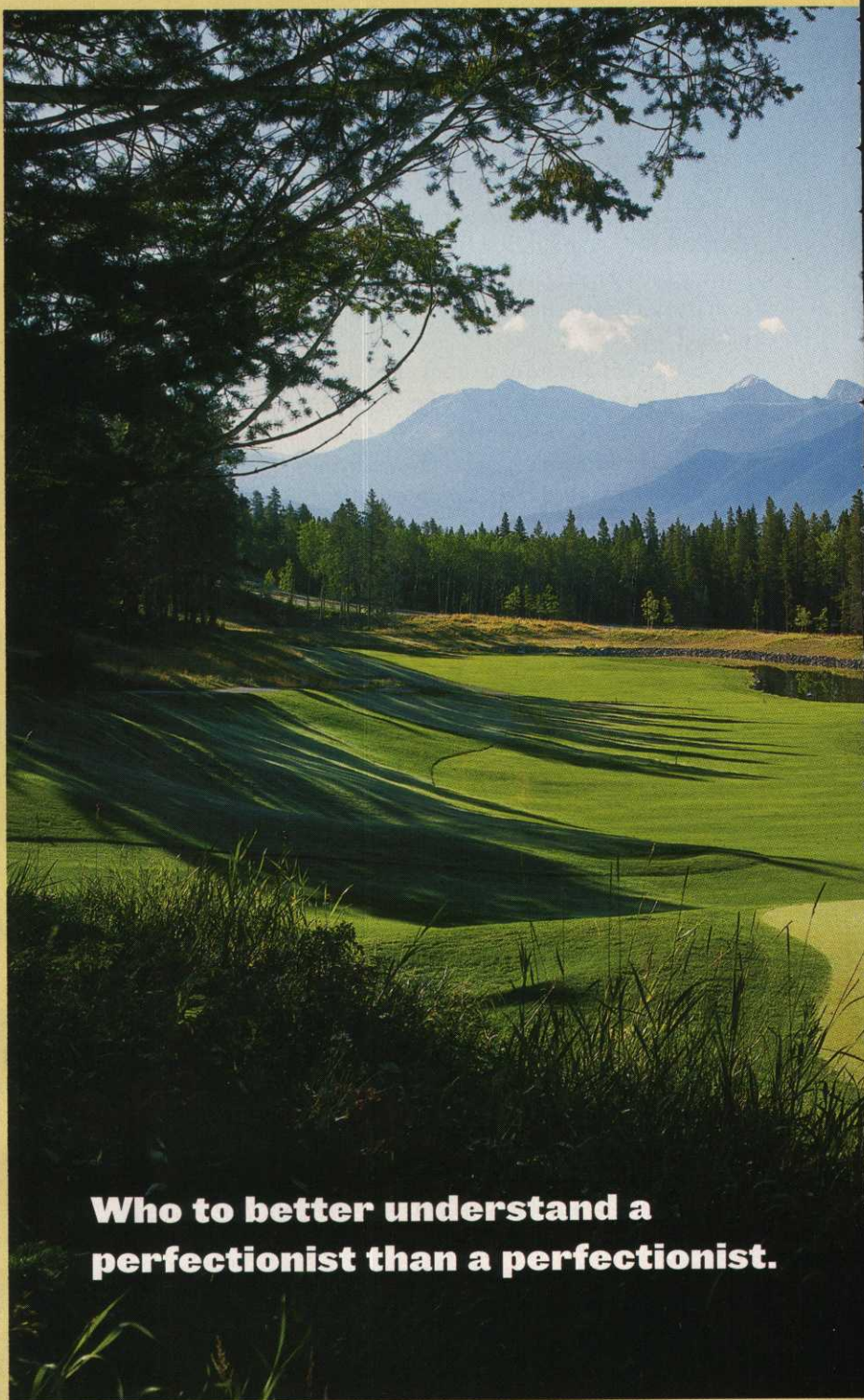
Joel Jackson, CGCS, retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.



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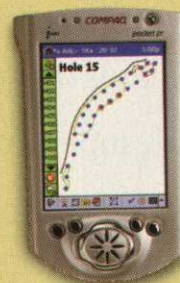
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Labor *of* Love

John Szklinski's deep voice quivers and cracks, and his blue eyes well with tears. Szklinski, superintendent of Southern Hills CC in Tulsa, Okla., is a mixture of melancholy and joy when he talks about his father, Richard, whom he calls his mentor and best friend.

Szklinski leans forward in his chair and wipes the trickling tears from his face with his large, coarse hands. His eyes are bloodshot but beaming when he tells how much his 60-year-old father has taught him about ethics, responsibility and hard work.

"I am whom he created," Szklinski says softly, noting he has seen his dad, who lives in his hometown of State College, Pa., only four times in the past 12 years because they live so far apart. "I miss my dad. He taught me a lot. I'm grateful."

BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR

One of the things the sensitive and strapping 6-foot-4 Szklinski learned from his father, who worked in the electronics industry for 35 years, was an intense work ethic. That work ethic has helped Szklinski get to where he is now. Southern Hills is one of the top tracks in the country, as well as the host course of the 2001 U.S. Open, June 14-17. Szklinski, who says he has wanted to be a superintendent since he was 18, is at Southern Hills because he worked his tail off to get there.

Szklinski and Southern Hills have benefited from each other. The course's green chairman, John Frame, says long-time members of the club have told him that Southern Hills hasn't looked better in 30 years. The club's general

Biography

Name: John Szklinski

Age: 36

Education: Penn State University

Years as superintendent at Southern Hills CC: 2.5

Previous Positions: 1994-1998, superintendent of Desert Highlands GC, Scottsdale, Ariz.; 1990-1994, superintendent of Desert Forest GC, Carefree, Ariz.

Previous Tournament Preparation: 1990 USGA Senior Amateur Championship at Desert Forest

Family: Wife, Jill, and two children, Devyn and Andrew

On his golf game: "I have time to play about once every three months. If you're playing four times a year, you're not playing well. You'll have moments of genius, but you'll also have moments of buffoonery. That's me."

manager, Nick Sidorakis, says Szklinski is one of the hardest-working and smartest superintendents in the business.

"John is a ball of fire, and he has tremendous

Continued on page 30

BILL WELCH

**John Szklinski proves
hard work will get you
somewhere – like
Southern Hills CC and
hosting the U.S. Open**





General manager Nick Sidorakis (right) says John Szklinski is a leader and a visionary — just what Southern Hills needed.

Continued from page 28

skills,” says Sidorakis, who hired Szklinski in December 1998 to replace Bob Randquist, who was at Southern Hills for nearly 19 years. “I couldn’t ask more from an employee. He works seven days a week. I have to tell him when to go home.”

But it’s more than Szklinski’s work ethic that impresses Sidorakis, Frame and members of Southern Hills. It’s Szklinski’s fervor for his job that wows them most. Szklinski genuinely *loves* what he does.

When he talks about preparing the course for the U.S. Open, you feel his zeal. After listening to Szklinski rave about Southern Hills for an hour, with his arms waving and head bob-

bing, you’re pumped to go out on the course and rake bunkers with him for eight hours.

“This is his love; this is his passion,” explains Frame, a Tulsa surgeon. “John is miserable when the weather is inclement, and he can’t be outside doing something.”

“He’s in perpetual motion; he’s nonstop,” says assistant superintendent Todd Towery.

Szklinski is confident in his ability as a manager of people and an authority on grass, but he’s also humble. Szklinski insists he’s the most fortunate superintendent in the world to achieve two of his top career goals — being a superintendent at a top-ranked course and hosting a Major — at the ripe old age of 36.

He may be fortunate for reaching those goals, but life as the superintendent at Southern Hills has been difficult — at times, drastically difficult. Szklinski has endured hardships in the last 2.5 years, including loss of staff, vandalism, a maintenance facility fire and a severe drought, from which other superintendents might have walked away.

“He has persevered through a lot of adversity,” Sidorakis says. “But he’s stronger for it.”

Szklinski was selected for the job from a pool of superintendents from the nation’s top 25 golf courses, Sidorakis says. Szklinski came to Southern Hills from Desert Highlands GC in Scottsdale, Ariz., where he was superintendent for five years. Szklinski, who has degrees in agribusiness and turfgrass management from Penn State University, didn’t like what he saw at Southern Hills upon his arrival — specifically the work ethic

Continued on page 32

BILL WELCH

Szklinski rates Southern Hills CC for the 101st U.S. Open:

On the course: “It’s unbelievably tight. With the fairways cut down, the roughs up and the trees full of leaves, you feel like you’re in a box when playing. It’s claustrophobic.”

On the 12th hole, the course’s signature hole: “It’s a tough par 4. There’s usually rough around the green, but it has been cut down. If your ball hits right, it could trickle down to the creek.”

On the 18th hole: “It will be a brutal hole. It’s 465 yards and a par 4. It’s a dogleg right into the wind. It features a green with enough speed that balls will fall off the face of the earth.”

On the favorite: “It’s going to be someone who’s very controlled off the tee. Vijay Singh is the kind of golfer who could do well here. The course favors him if he’s playing well.”

On strategy: “As a player, you can never relax out here. There’s not a lull on the course.”