

Golf's greatest asset? The politically correct, feel-good answer is obvious: the people. Without those devoted hackers in their sweat-stained bucket caps whizzing around in GPS-guided golf cars, there would be no golf. Right?

Well, without golf courses, there would be no place for those people to play. So courses are golf's greatest asset.

And how are the governing bodies and the golfers showing their love for golf's architecture? By suggesting that courses are easier to alter than the equipment rules.

What *love*.

These complicated venues are the grandest and most unique in the world of sport. Many are so beautiful and fascinating and enduring to their regular customers that they can safely be called works of art. Most are maintained to a daily standard considered unfathomable not long ago.

The fine line between a course that functions as it was intended vs. one that doesn't measure up is now muddied by constant distance increases. Golf courses feel compelled to adapt to changes in equipment while the USGA has watched and supported this absurd development. Meanwhile, the USGA's incomplete testing procedures have made the golfer's equipment become nearly as important as his skill.

Thus, many lovingly built and maintained courses — most serving the sport admirably for decades — are purportedly letting us down because they can't withstand an assault from today's equipment. But it's not just old courses that can't keep up.

One layout hosting a PGA Tour event this fall was recently lengthened (at its own expense) to add yardage in a mad race to keep up with this year's hot ball and driver. The course in question hasn't been open for a year.

Here's what golf has come to: The 150 or more acres that were painstakingly constructed must be modified to make room for equipment "progress." Apparently, buying the latest equipment gives golfers genuine happiness and hope through these new consumables. So tees are added, fairways narrowed, rough cul-

tivated like a crop and trees planted — all to confine distance increases both real and perceived.

Why have golf's governing bodies shrugged off the apparent silliness of placing a burden on courses to keep up? Because it costs them less. Don't they mind that they've had a hand in changing golf's Wrigley Fields? Not only have they torn down the ivy-covered brick walls at many of our classics, but now they're buying the real estate in the neighborhoods beyond center field to expand their playing fields — all to prevent frivolous lawsuits from a few manufacturers.

Even more disturbing is the notion that the "legal guardians" of golf have bought into the marketing spin that equipment advances have made this hard game more accessible and popular for the masses. Unfortunately, the various economic indicators and surveys make it quite clear that the desire to get a 10-yard fix isn't providing golf with new customers or keeping others around.

And is golf great because, as Curtis Strange insisted recently, we can consume the same equipment the pros use? Don't beautiful courses, the joy of being outdoors, the camaraderie and an adventuresome round play a part, too?

Can't keep up

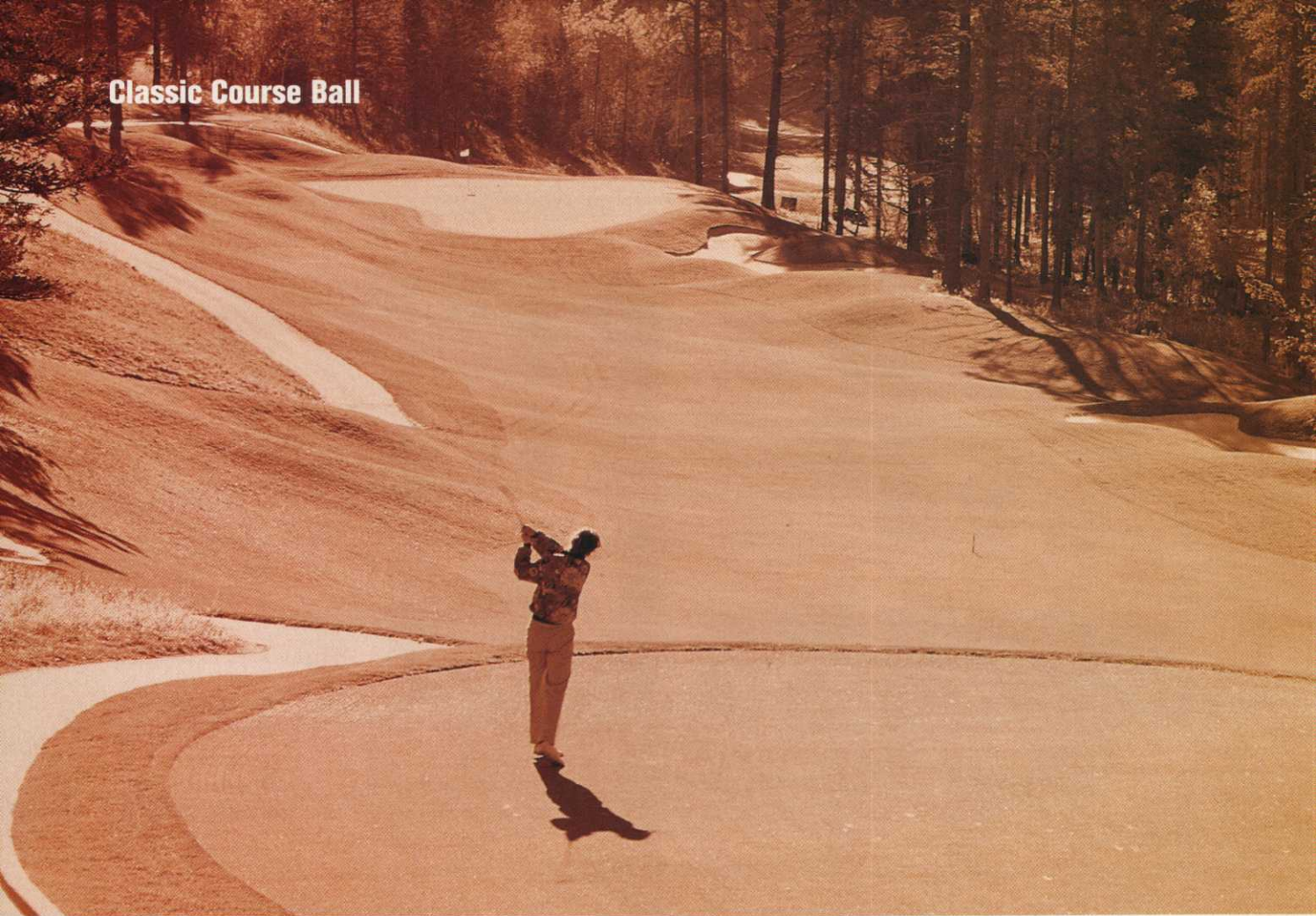
Technology in the form of new clubs, balls and machines that better fit player launch angles has allowed good players to hit the ball distances unimaginable just three years ago. The USGA is unable to test refined launch-angle conditions tailored to individual swings, which is how the companies have circumvented the USGA's testing limits (and will continue to even under the new USGA testing guidelines).

Distance increases have empowered many average golfers to think they are longer and better than they really are. Courses are then expected to ensure the integrity of slope so that handicaps "travel well" and so the layout remains "respectable."

Because better players who drive the ball longer and straighter are considered golf's voices of reason, many have bought into the

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USGA's suggestion that courses are easier to change than the testing.

Effects of distance increases

Restoration projects are changing focus. More and more projects have not expanded green square footage or widened fairways because such expanded areas of short grass might make the course unable to "defend itself" against the latest equipment. Renovation projects or new courses are looking for distance and other methods to rig the design so that a certain course rating or back tee yardage is produced. Making the design more fun gets lost in the numbers race.

Already an expensive endeavor, architecture has been deemed easiest to handle the expense of this ever-changing game. The equipment manufacturers, which believe it is their birthright to sell the latest balls and drivers, contribute only complaints that the industry is not bringing new customers to golf.

Pandering isn't working

As architect Max Behr said in 1927: "The seller of goods generally panders to the blind instincts of his customers. Rarely do we find him

an artist considering what the result must be when his goods reach their destination. And the blind instinct that he catered to was an insane desire to merely hit the ball a long way."

Yes, every golfer loves the distance boost he gets. But distance fixes have not been enough. Every study suggests that golf is losing customers because of the excessive time it takes to play, the high cost of rounds, expensive equipment and the difficulty of the sport. These insidious elements can all be tied to the rubber-band effect on golf courses, where designs are stretched and narrowed to combat distance.

Only a handful of people in the golf industry see the expansion of courses as a good thing. In a survival move, the golf magazines have avoided meaningful discussion of the issue. If this essay appeared in one of the mass-market publications, the magazine's relationship with several equipment manufacturers would end. Certain companies have made it clear that even suggesting a cap on distance is slanderous (even if the suggestion comes from Jack Nicklaus).

The American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) continues to express con-

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cern for placing the distance burden on golf courses. Though ASGCA members could profit from a wave of jobs retrofitting courses for the latest meteorite of a ball, most have taken the high road out of respect for tradition.

The USGA Green Section will continue on and the U.S. Open will remain one of the four

Majors, but the USGA's once respected place in the sport has been undermined by its complacency and arrogance in shrugging off repeated pleas from folks like Jack Nicklaus, Tom Watson and Ben Crenshaw.

The PGA Tour is only interested in one charity: itself. When pro golf becomes as dreadful to watch as the power-dominated pro tennis game is today (closer than they realize), the Tour will do something. But by then it'll be too late.

A backdoor solution

The golf course industry can separate itself from this nonsense and lay the groundwork for a future that emphasizes the joy of playing golf, with equipment a secondary issue.

Golf professionals, superintendents, architects, administrators, committee types and even golf car boys who want to secure golf's future can reverse the trend of declining rounds and expanding courses. Or at the least they can start spreading the word so the sport can become the focus again.

How do we take golf back from the manufacturers? Look to Softspikes. The golf course industry single-handedly campaigned for and implemented the ban on metal spikes to improve turf conditions. More than 12,000 courses now ban metal spikes, and all because it started on (big pun warning here) a grassroots level.

The same can happen with the golf ball. Introducing — the Classic Course Ball.

Here's how it could work. Every time the topic of adding new bunkers or planting trees comes up this fall, winter and spring, ask the people in favor of these costly rigging devices if they would instead play a ball that reverts back to 1995 distances.

Many will say they would be open to such an idea as an alternative to a costly renovation. But be prepared for a reminder speech detailing how noble they are, but that they can't envision other golfers going along with the idea. Nod and say, thanks.

That's all you have to do. Plant the idea. Put it out there as an alternative to all of the silly ideas suggested to offset increasing distance. A distance rollback will only work by making golfers think they came up with the idea.

And how exactly would such a restricted ball work within the rules of golf? Courses would invoke a local rule that the Classic Course Ball is to be used while all eight million other

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USGA rules can still apply. Naturally, a regular foursome will have to agree as one to use the ball to have a fair match, and all players in the club championship would have to use the ball if the course in question embraced the ball.

What about handicaps? As we know, course ratings, slope and handicaps are important. Courses would have to be rerated based on such a ball. This will feed into the accountant approach most golfers take to their courses. They can rejoice when the course rating and slope go up after the local association finds the course playing tougher with the new (old playing characteristics) ball. Handicaps will travel well again. All will be right with the world.

Who will make the Classic Course Ball? A shrewd company that's willing to take a low-risk chance. By being "the first," the company will dominate the initial market and secure brand recognition.

This "first" manufacturer will have a patent on the ball, and someone like Hootie Johnson might turn to it when he gets tired of rearranging Augusta National each summer. And

if it's really bright, this company will work closely with PGA of America professionals to establish the ball at its courses.

Think about it. Company A introduces the Classic Course Ball and a prestigious club like Pine Valley or Cypress Point starts selling it in their shops. Members use it in the club championship or invitational. Word gets out.

Then the ball is used in a tournament, maybe the local city amateur or a college event. Good players jump on the bandwagon, followed immediately by those who think they're good players.

Suddenly, that ball is going to become pretty cool at any course — public or private — under 7,100 yards. What does the golf industry have to lose by asking golfers to take this minor step backward?

The numbers are all down and despite claims that technology makes golf more fun, it is not sustaining play and never will. Fun rounds of golf that don't take all day will keep people in the sport — not the dream of another 10-yard distance fix. ■



DIGITAL STOCK

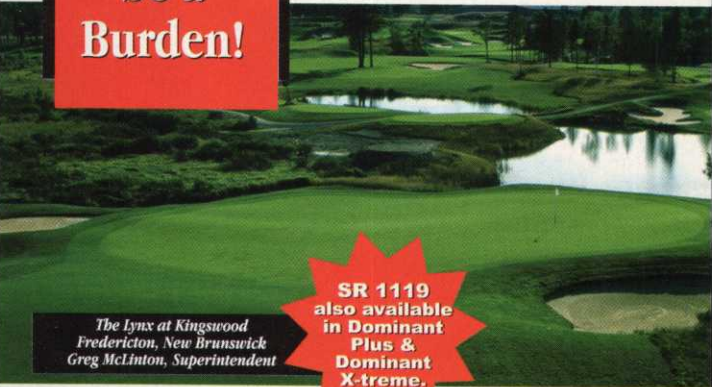
Certain companies have made it clear that even suggesting a cap on distance is slanderous (even if the suggestion comes from Jack Nicklaus).

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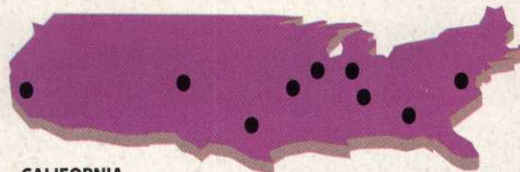
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BACKSPIN	6.9	BACKSPIN	6.9	BACKSPIN	6.2	BACKSPIN	6.4
PENNCROSS	5.3	PENNCROSS	5.9	PENNCROSS	5.3	PENNCROSS	5.1
LSD	0.4	LSD	0.3	LSD	0.3	LSD	0.2



CALIFORNIA		COLORADO		TEXAS		KENTUCKY	
L93	7.6	A-1	7.9	A-1	7.2	A-4	7.4
BACKSPIN	7.1	BACKSPIN	7.1	BACKSPIN	6.7	BACKSPIN	6.9
PENNCROSS	6.0	PENNCROSS	4.7	PENNCROSS	5.0	PENNCROSS	5.7
LSD	0.4	LSD	0.5	LSD	0.4	LSD	0.4

ALABAMA	
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BACKSPIN	6.1
CATO	5.1
LSD	0.4



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Is Time on Your Side?

Experts share their tips on how to make the most of your workday so it doesn't interfere with your life

BY BECKY MOLLENKAMP

Lynn Elliott's desk is a sea of yellow sticky notes. He uses the tiny pieces of paper to keep track of the dozen hats he wears each day. He is a husband and a father of two. He coaches his children's baseball, softball, soccer and wrestling teams. He is the family cook. He runs his own sprinkler business. As if all that weren't enough, he is also the superintendent at Allenmore Public GC in Tacoma, Wash.

Elliott's workday is supposed to begin at 5 a.m. and end at 1:30 p.m., but it typically lasts about five hours longer. He has a small, four-person crew, so Elliott does it all at Allenmore — from mowing and fertilizing to making purchasing and staffing decisions.

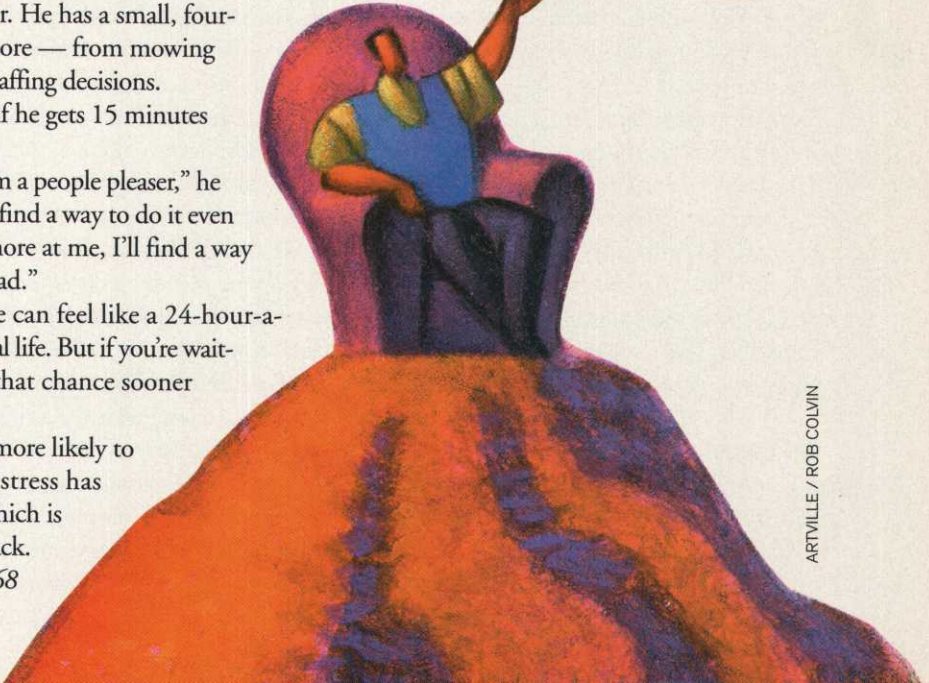
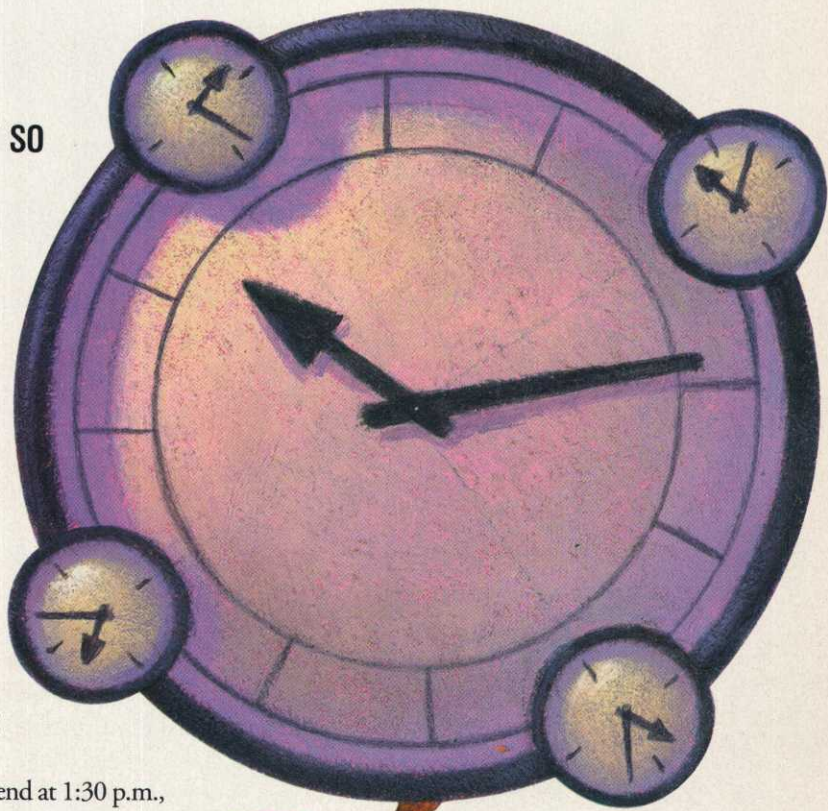
With all he does, Elliott says he's lucky if he gets 15 minutes a day to himself.

"I wish I had the ability to say no, but I'm a people pleaser," he says. "I don't like to disappoint people, so I find a way to do it even if it means sacrificing sleep. If you throw more at me, I'll find a way to get it done. I figure I'll rest when I'm dead."

Sound familiar? Running a golf course can feel like a 24-hour-a-day job, which leaves little time for a personal life. But if you're waiting for death to take a nap, you may get that chance sooner than you wish.

Research suggests that workaholics are more likely to be depressed, anxious, and angry. High stress has also been linked to high blood pressure, which is a risk factor for heart disease and heart attack.

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In Japan, 10,000 workers a year drop dead at their desks as a result of 60- to 70-hour work weeks.

It's not impossible to maintain a healthy balance between work and home. Here, experts share their tips for making the most of your workday so it doesn't interfere with your life.

"A lot of people say, 'It's not my fault, it's my industry's fault. I'm doing the job of two people.' But I cannot find a person who can't trim some fat in their work," says Laura Stack, author of *Leave the Office Earlier*, which will be released by Broadway Books next spring. "People working 60 hours a week can cut it down to 45 or 50 if they learn how to be more efficient."

Set priorities

The first step to lightening your load is to set concrete goals, both professionally and personally, experts say. Once you know what you want out of life, it's easier to prioritize each day's activities according to what is actually helping you meet your goals.

When you have to juggle as many balls as Elliott, it's easy to let any one of those duties monopolize your time. If you don't prioritize your life, someone or something else will.

"I don't set my priorities," Elliott says. "I fly by the seat of my pants."

Completing tasks as they present themselves may seem like the right call in the heat of the moment, but experts say it may come back to haunt you later.

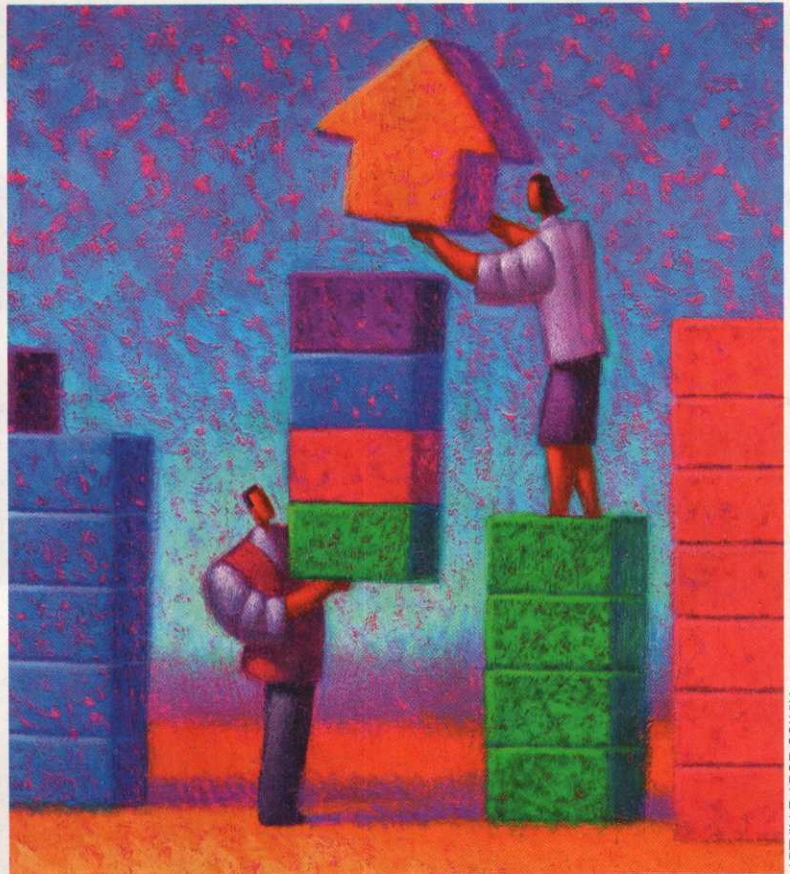
"You have to make sure that the operational things don't push out the strategic," says Stack, whose Web site, *theproductivitypro.com*, offers a free time-management newsletter. "If you don't protect an hour or two for marketing and strategic planning, you're going to suddenly find yourself in a big hole."

Focus on quality, not quantity, of tasks. It's far better to finish two essential chores than a dozen low-priority tasks, according to experts. And throughout the day, check in with yourself and see that what you are doing is the best use of your time.

Get organized

Of course, it's virtually impossible to prioritize tasks if you're only organizational system is dozens of notes scattered across a desk.

"I'm partly a procrastinator because I'm not



as organized as I could be," Elliott admits. "I'm always burning the candle at both ends."

A cluttered space is typically a reflection of a disorganized person. Hours can be wasted just searching for a file or phone number. Whether you prefer paper or technology, pick one organized planning system and stick with it, Stack says. Use it for both personal and professional responsibilities. Keep it handy at all times so you're not forced to rely on memory or sticky notes.

Organized people are much better equipped to take advantage of odd times. Try paying bills at the doctor's office or generate tomorrow's to-do list while the car is being serviced.

That to-do list is another essential. Set aside 10 minutes at the end of each day to reflect on what was accomplished and what needs to be tackled the next day.

"For every one minute you spend planning, you'll save 10 minutes in execution," Stack says. "So when you have unexpected blocks of free time, you can just look at your list and go. You don't have a decision dilemma. You'll know what needs to be done next and you can get to it."

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**If you don't
prioritize your
life, someone
or something
else will.**

How quickly will your turf
recover
once the snow is gone?



A snow mold and winter disease program for early spring green-up.

WINTER STRESS LEADS TO SPRING HEADACHES



Winter decline is the deterioration of turf quality during the cool season caused by the interaction of disease and stresses. Turfgrass becomes stressed as snow cover, high moisture and low temperatures weaken it. The turf plant then becomes more susceptible to cool-season diseases that further weaken the turfgrass. Disease causes more vulnerability to stresses, which in turn leads to more disease, and the stress-disease-stress cycle continues. By the time temperatures rise and the snow melts, superintendents are often faced with widespread winter decline when preparing their courses for spring play.



Snow Mold

Gray and pink snow mold, the main contributors to winter turf injury, are caused by several fungi that thrive on cold, wet turf. Snow mold damage appears as patches of dead turf; repair can take months.

Cool-Season *Pythium*

Cool-season *Pythium* root rot is difficult to recognize and often mistaken for other diseases. It causes stunted growth, rotting of turf roots and turf that is thin and slow to recover, even when temperatures rise in the spring.



Anthraxnose

Basal rot and foliar blight anthracnose thrive on weakened turf. Basal rot, the more prolific of the two, first appears in March but is active through November on *Poa annua* and creeping bentgrass. First signs of infection include irregular patches of orange-to-yellowing turf (also known as winter anthracnose). But basal rot is difficult to detect in the early stages and once the disease is visible, the battle is already lost; prevention is key.

Other Winter Stresses

Harsh winter weather can cause as much injury to turf as disease. Early exposure to below-freezing temperatures will damage turf that hasn't hardened off, while turf left exposed to cold and windy conditions loses moisture, leading to further damage. Frost kills foliage and may cause curling, browning or blackening of leaves.

Control Challenges

A fall fungicide program is crucially important since it is counted on to keep turf disease-free throughout winter, when colder weather and snow cover make applying chemicals nearly impossible.

Because of its complex makeup, snow mold control requires a number of fungicides, and tank mixes usually contain one or more of the three most popular products: 26GT®, PCNB and chlorothalonil.

While superintendents have always had to deal with the phytotoxic effects associated with PCNB use, they also must consider EPA restrictions, which have limited chlorothalonil applications.

Proven Solutions for Winter Diseases

Bayer Environmental Science offers a full line of superior fungicides, including several that manage winter disease and ease turf's transition from cool weather to warmer temperatures.

26GT Fungicide has been the foundation for effective snow mold control for more than 20 years. Trusted by superintendents for fast, effective brown patch and dollar spot management, 26GT also provides the most effective, broad-spectrum snow mold control when used in tank mixes with other products. 26GT also is an effective alternative to chlorothalonil.



ProStar® Fungicide offers proven control of gray snow mold. Incorporating different chemistries into regular fungicide applications is necessary to reduce risk of disease resistance.

But when it comes to a superintendent's snow mold control program, applying new



fungicides can be an unwelcome risk. That's why ProStar, a time-tested fungicide for gray snow mold control, is an effective addition to any program. An excellent tank-mix partner, ProStar exhibits none of the turf phytotoxicity associated with PCNB. Plus, applying ProStar with 26GT will ensure season-long control of the complete snow mold complex, without affecting turf growth.

Bayleton® Fungicide prevents and controls important fungal diseases, which are part of winter decline, including anthracnose and pink and gray snow mold. This proven, trusted product works systemically, providing residual control for up to 28 days. Bayleton also is a versatile tank-mix partner with other fungicides for broad-spectrum disease control.