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Golfdom

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20

The Reinvention of **WOODWARD**

The former CEO of the GCSAA opens up in this industry exclusive.

BY SETH JONES

columns

- 6 Reading Greens
Grip It and Rip It,
Mr. Woodward
- 16 From the Back Tees
Crank Up the Rhetoric
- 18 Turf M.D.
Something New,
Something Old
- 48 Shack Attack
Augusta Syndrome
on the Downswing

departments

- 8 Off the Fringe
Japanese golf is in dire straits;
Georgia Golf Day a big score;
Golfdom adds to staff; Praise
for 9-hole courses.
- 14 Hole of the Month
- 43 Clark Talks Turf
Clark Throssell, Ph.D.,
discusses spring dead
spot with Maria Tomaso-
Peterson.

Turfgrass Trends

This month, *Golfdom's* practical research digest explores ways to minimize spray drift.
See pages 45-47.

Online Exclusive



Visit the *Golfdom Daily* at www.golfdom.blogspot.com to get a sneak preview from Congressional Country Club, site of this year's U.S. Open.

27

The New Plant Health Label

Getting its start in the crop industry, it's now moved to turf. So what does "plant health" mean to this industry?

By Seth Jones and Beth Geraci



35

Recalling a Most Masterful Win

Billy Fuller recalls Jack's amazing Masters.

By Ron Furlong

About the cover

This photo of Mark Woodward was taken by editor in chief Seth Jones at TPC Scottsdale.

40

GIS Spotlight

Golf maintenance gear took centerstage at the 2011 Golf Industry Show.



Can we get a mulligan?

The February issue of *Golfdom* should have stated that Anthony Williams, CGCS, CGM, was the first person to win back-to-back national ELGA awards (including the overall award in 2006) in two different categories and at two different properties. He is not the first person to win both awards, as we stated. We regret the error.

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April 8th, 2008: I find myself in a rental car with Mark Woodward, then the superintendent at Torrey Pines, but just introduced as the incoming CEO of GCSAA. We're driving across the great state of Georgia, on our way to the Masters. The plan is to introduce Woodward to the assembled membership of the Golf Writers Association of America.

Almost three years to the day later: I find myself in a golf cart with Mark Woodward, now the director of business development for Landscapes Unlimited. We're driving around TPC Scottsdale, talking about both of our departures from GCSAA. My plan is to reintroduce Woodward — who seemingly just disappeared from GCSAA one night — to the industry in the pages of *Golfdom*.

Funny how things work out.

If this is your first time seeing Mark since he resigned from GCSAA, you'll notice he looks different. He's 40 pounds lighter. He's grown a goatee. He's smiling again.

I was pleased to catch up with Mark in Scottsdale, since I missed him at the Golf Industry Show. I can only speak for myself, but I enjoyed working for Mark. He's a fun guy to hang out with. He likes asking and talking about your family. He puts you at ease.

Mark wasn't at ease when I told him my idea for the cover of this issue. I told him I wanted him to rip in half the memorable cover of our January 2010 issue. That cover featured a close-up of Woodward, looking stressed, in black-and-white, with the line "Tough it Out" under his face.

Mark was unsure of the message I was trying to send. "Won't people see that as me trying to be negative toward my time with GCSAA?" he asked me. "I don't want to give that impression. I'm very fond of GCSAA."

As I banked around the No. 3 tee box on the Stadium Course of TPC Scottsdale, I told him how I interpreted it: Not as a slight to the GCSAA, but as a celebration of his newfound happiness at Landscapes Unlimited, and with life in general.

Let's face it, the guy on the cover of that January 2010 issue was not happy. He's worried,

Grip It And Rip It, Mr. Woodward

BY SETH JONES



HE'S FOUND A
NEW JOB, NEW
HEALTH, AND
EVEN A NEW PUPPY
THAT HE AND HIS
WIFE HAVEN'T
NAMED YET.

and for good reason. The association he was hired to run had been losing millions of dollars. He was handcuffed to his BlackBerry, constantly worried about incoming emails, even in the middle of the night. He and his staff had just endured a Christmas-time furlough, while many others were now drawing unemployment.

There's a big difference between the January 2010 Mark Woodward and the April 2011 Mark Woodward. He's shed pounds and he's shed stress. He's found a new job, new health, and even a new puppy that he and his wife haven't named yet. He's moved back to his longtime home of Scottsdale, Ariz., near his family.

These are happy days for Mark Woodward, I told him. So let's rip that old *Golfdom* cover in half as a way of closing that chapter and celebrating a new beginning, a reinvention.

And now he was with me. He joyfully ripped four copies right down the middle. "Tough *that* out," I thought to myself as the pages shredded.

This is Woodward's first time publicly talking about his resignation from GCSAA. He said he felt the timing was right. He wanted people to know that he didn't just fall off the face of the earth, that he still loved his career and his association. He and his wife, Amy, are happy and doing just fine.

It was a tumultuous few years for Woodward, and for the entire industry. For this particular superintendent, things worked out just fine in the end. His story isn't finished, but that last chapter is behind him.

Here's to wishing my friend the best of luck in what will probably be the closing chapters of his career. Just like that copy of *Goldom*, I hope he grips it and rips it.

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Off The Fringe

You are all well aware of the catastrophes that hit Japan on March 11, 2011. Our hearts go out to all those who lost family members and loved ones. The 9.0 earthquake and tsunami that followed struck the shores of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures, sealing the fate of not only some 30,000 unsuspecting people, but also affecting the livelihood of the whole country, including that of the entire Japanese golf industry.

The problem is, looking forward, with the gloom of a three-punch disaster: earthquake and tsunami followed by a nuclear incident, the hopes of international golf tourism taking hold here are gone for the short- to mid-term, at best.

The sad truth is that the ripple effect in the golf industry has caused a full stop, affecting the entire country's courses, regardless of geographical location to the three affected prefectures. So a single mother who caddies part-time in Kyoto at a course that has seen zero effect from the radiation, earthquakes or tsunami can't pay her bills for the next six months as customers just aren't showing up. The affected Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures have a total of 126 courses between them, making up approximately 5 percent of the courses in Japan. Although important, they are just a small part of the larger picture.

Regardless of the courses' proximity to the disaster-struck areas, nuclear radiation just isn't something any country's image can bounce back from easily. Without swift closure to the nuclear issue, people will just choose to travel and golf elsewhere. In an in-



Japanese golf in dire straits

By Bennett J. Galloway

Only 5 percent of the courses in Japan are in the devastated areas.

dustry where perception equals reality, a discerned preemptive effort from the Japanese tourism authorities is needed.

In an attempt to counter this disaster, many clubs all over Japan are looking to not only help out with fundraising for charities on the ground in the disaster-stricken areas, but also to increase rounds at their courses to help their own staffs get back on their feet. Let's face it, the majority of your green fee doesn't go to the club; it goes to the people who work there and to the upkeep of the course that makes it all viable.

The Japanese are a resilient and hard-working people who, with the help of all of us working together, will survive. So in the not-so-distant future, stay tuned for great and exciting things from an industry and people that may be down, but are by no means out. ■

Bennett J. Galloway is the director of golf at the Gotemba Golf Club in Japan. To read more from him and to keep up on Japan's progress in golf, visit www.golf-in-japan.com

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Off The Fringe

Georgia golf descends on capital



Anthony Williams, CGCS, CGM, at Stone Mountain (Ga.) Golf Club talks on camera about the importance of golf.

of the biggest years ever for golf in one state," Mangum told *Golfdom*. "It really puts us on the golf map."

As a whole the Georgia golf industry generated a total economic impact of \$5.1 billion in 2009, supporting nearly 57,000 jobs with \$1.5 billion of wage income.

Georgia's House of Representatives and Senate each presented resolutions proclaiming 2011 as the "Year of Golf in Georgia," citing golf's numerous contributions to the state. It was the first Georgia Golf Day, but *Golfdom* contributing editor Anthony Williams, CGCS, CGM, promised it would not be the last.

"It was such a successful event, we will certainly have it again," he said. "It's a great opportunity for us to get the word out on golf, and honestly, it went even better than we expected." ■

Golf was on Georgia's mind recently at Georgia Golf Day at the state's capital.

On hand to present the significance of the game to state politicians were representatives of the Georgia GCSA, as well as Steve Mona, CEO of the World Golf Foundation and Joe Steranka, CEO of the PGA of America.

One of the presenters was Ken

Mangum, CGCS, director of golf and grounds at the Atlanta Athletic Club, site of this year's PGA Championship. He was happy to share with an audience that included Georgia Governor Nathan Deal, how significant golf is in the state, especially in 2011 with the state hosting two of the four majors in golf and the Tour Championship.

"It's about as big as it gets, it's one

PHOTOCOURTESY: ANTHONY WILLIAMS

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