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**T**he beauty of our lives and what makes them special is we're different. Everything about people is different, and that's cool. Whether at home with family or working on the job, almost everything is different. These differences are what make the world and our lives interesting, rewarding, challenging and frustrating.

But you and me have something in common: the golf industry. So that probably means that, like me:

■ **You are thankful for this wonderful industry.**

The fact you can make a living doing something you love, in one of the greatest sports in the world, is truly remarkable.

■ **You are thankful for the fact that you've been able to impact so many others through your work.** Talk to your friends who work in other industries. I'm willing to bet they can't say the same thing. Most people I talk to outside of the industry envy those of us who have made a good living working in it.

■ **You feel blessed to have amassed many friends and colleagues in a close-knit community.** How many times have you talked to your golf course maintenance counterparts and heard someone say the best part of his job is the people he's been able to meet throughout his career? Throughout my career, I've had thousands of networking opportunities worldwide, and I've tried to take advantage of every single one of them. Golf is a huge business, yet it's a small one compared with others. Be sure to cultivate relationships with those you meet.

■ **You have seen the industry grow and change in many ways.** You've seen it change in ways that have impacted the game and your career. Technology has made our jobs easier, enabling us to improve the experience for golfers a little bit more each time they play the game. At one point, even nongolfers had interest in the game. After the 2008 U.S. Open, when Tiger Woods beat Rocco Mediate in 91 holes, I had many nongolfer friends tell me they couldn't take their eyes off of the TV because of the excitement.

And yet, if you're at all like me:

■ **You understand that golf isn't the same as it used to be.** The industry is transforming. We're not

## If You're At All Like Me

BY MARK WOODWARD



only looking back at what golf was, we're also looking forward to what golf will be. In many cases, it's a little scary. Back in the day, working in the golf industry was fun and exciting. Now, even though we have a passion for golf and our careers, golf is different than it used to be. In today's world, the game has become much more of a business.

■ **You wonder about the future of the industry.**

Because every year, more golf courses are closing their doors than opening them. Granted, many markets were oversaturated with golf courses in the industry's heyday, but when I see more than 100 courses closing during each of the past few years, it gets my attention. Additionally, rounds played have declined in many areas and are flat at best. Hopefully, the grow-the-game initiatives the industry is developing will help, but I'm not overly optimistic. We all know many golf courses are struggling.

■ **You worry about friends who are losing their jobs at vulnerable times in their lives.** Many of them are being forced to say "goodbye" to the golf business, a business to which they have devoted their entire lives. And if you get to thinking about it too much, you'll start thinking about all of the other workers in the business — not superintendents alone — who are affected by golf course closures and downsizing.

So, if you are at all like me, as much as you love the game of golf, the industry and your career, you have the same concerns about golf's future strength and viability that I do.

In this regard, we're not so different after all.

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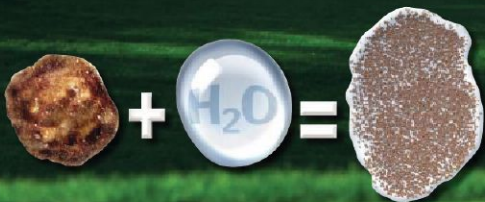
*Mark Woodward is president of Mark Woodward and Associates, principal of DaMarCo Golf, CEO of MasterStep Golf Management Group and a contributing editor for Golfdom.*

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**T**he fact that the golf industry is in trouble from a growth perspective, given the declining participation numbers and annual course closures, is nothing new. But the fallout from that trend often isn't discussed.

I wonder what's happening at the turf schools that used to graduate a steady stream of aspiring golf course superintendents. The numbers of potential positions and career opportunities have declined because of golf course attrition, so are students considering alternative majors and professions?

If ever there was a golf course industry safety net for terminated or displaced superintendents, it, too, has shrunk because opportunities to go to the dark side have become scarcer as sales of equipment, fertilizer and chemical companies have declined. And we've all heard stories about former superintendents getting hired by a course as an assistant, a spray tech or an irrigation tech so they can earn a paycheck. Those positions also are less abundant because of the cuts to labor budgets.

Individual terminations can be absorbed by the overall industry, but when a course closes its doors and an entire crew becomes unemployed, not everyone will find a safety net in the golf industry. Superintendents — whether terminated by job performance, ownership change, management or member conflicts — have a more difficult time finding another home in golf. Several superintendents I've talked to during the past few years are transitioning into lawn, landscape or nursery businesses to keep their green thumbs green. Other superintendents have burned out with the business and have opted to go into completely different lines of work depending on their skill sets, interests and educational backgrounds.

During the past few years, a few superintendents transitioned into turf or superintendent association management positions — folks such as Jack Mackenzie in Minnesota, Bob LaChance in Ohio and Monroe Miller in Wisconsin. I made my conversion about 15 years ago. Thankfully, it was my choice, not someone else's. Those opportunities and others

## Career Detours and Roadblocks

BY JOEL JACKSON



**“WHEN A COURSE  
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unrelated to the golf industry are enhanced by an individual's willingness to join, volunteer, participate, network and engage in continuing education — and learn skills that will make them better leaders and communicators.

Another side to the job loss dilemma, with its loss of income, is the state of one's emergency “rainy day” fund. A superintendent friend recently lost his job and wrote an article about learning to cope with the anger and frustration of the situation. One section of the article explores the need to have sufficient funds to meet his family's needs and obligations. He talks about having to change his spending habits and make sacrifices in the wake of the termination, but more importantly, he urges superintendents to adopt a budget that embraces more moderation, one that includes reserves for emergencies during economically flush times.

That same advice applies to retirement planning. Setting aside regular monthly contributions to a mutual fund or an IRA when one is younger will yield a comfortable retirement when the time comes. The same advice applies if one is beginning to save later in life. The monthly amount just needs to be larger. I've become more conservative with my investments since the 2008-2009 crash. Recently, I put some of the money back into a mutual fund for diversity, since CDs are yielding squat right now.

If you lose your job, don't hunker down. Continue to attend chapter meetings and network. Be strong for your family. Keep the faith and your sense of humor. You'll find another road to your future.

---

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

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**T**his past July I visited Moundbuilders Country Club in Newark, Ohio. Golf course superintendent Greg Goedde and his crew were cleaning up fallen trees and branches that resulted

from a severe storm that occurred June 29 and 30. The storm made headlines at the AT&T National PGA Tour event at Congressional Country Club outside Washington, D.C., when fans weren't allowed on the course because of the potential danger presented by fallen trees and the loss of electrical power.

Like many facilities, Moundbuilders has a tight budget, and when large, unexpected weather events occur, the cleanup costs are equally as unexpected.

Goedde took the time to show me the golf course. What makes Moundbuilders unique is its location on what I'd consider sacred ground, ground renowned for its unique series of shapes called "earthworks." About 3,000 years ago, an ancient people constructed mounds or monuments that appeared in various, mostly geometric, patterns throughout a large area. The mounds are roughly eight feet high and were constructed throughout the Mississippi Valley. The purpose of the mounds still is somewhat of a mystery, because most were likely worship sites, not burial grounds.

During the 1800s, as the population of the country moved west, many of the mounds were destroyed from farming and city development. In most cases, the mounds probably weren't completely understood or even noticed. The mounds and their formation were difficult to visualize and completely understand without the ability to observe them from the air.

In the early 1900s, the members of Moundbuilders Country Club leased 125 acres from the Ohio Historical Society, of which 52 acres are enclosed by the octagon mound and 20 acres are enclosed by the circle mound. The club's members commissioned architect Tom Bendelow to lay out the golf course through and around the mounds. The course was originally nine holes when it opened in 1911. Then in 1923, it was expanded to 18 holes.

I'm not an expert on architectural design,

## A Course Built on Sacred Ground

BY KARL DANNEBERGER, PH.D.



**"I HAVE LITTLE DOUBT THAT IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE GOLF COURSE, THE EARTHWORKS LIKELY WOULD HAVE BEEN DESTROYED."**

but this probably was one of those "18 stakes on a Sunday afternoon" layouts in which Bendelow was paid \$25. I'm not sure whether Bendelow realized the importance of the earthworks or if they were viewed solely as obstacles that happened to intrude on his layout. Whatever the case, the earthworks haven't been disturbed in the 100 years the course has occupied the land.

As Goedde talked about the course, it became apparent that, besides his agronomic expertise, he had a thorough knowledge of the site's history and historical significance. In addition to golfer issues, he deals with tourists who visit daily. And like others who have strong feelings for the historical site, he speaks with confidence.

Listening to Goedde and other superintendents, you realize that the job of superintendent draws on more than just what you learned in class; it requires passion and a commitment to continuing education.

I have little doubt that if it weren't for the golf course, the earthworks likely would have been destroyed. And after leaving the course, I visited the earthworks historical site down the road, where I learned more about the ancient people who were the Moundbuilders.

Unfortunately, with large budget cuts at agencies such as the Ohio Historical Society, the state wasn't able to clean up the large oaks and other trees that fell around the earthworks during the storm.

Golf has many positives. In this case, Moundbuilders Country Club has a symbiotic relationship with not only its environment, but also with history.

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*Karl Danneberger, Ph.D., is Golfdom's science editor and a professor at The Ohio State University. He can be reached at danneberger.1@osu.edu.*

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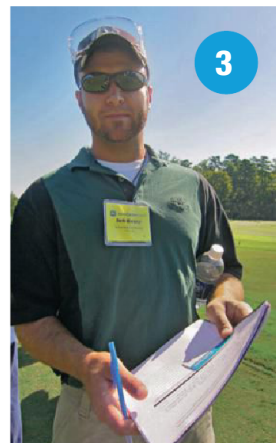
# Golfdom Gallery

WE CAME, WE SAW, WE TOOK PICTURES

## 1 Bethpage State Park, N.Y.

Bethpage Black superintendent Kevin Carroll waited until the crew and the volunteers were done with their barbecue dinners before giving them the evening assignments. And wet wipes.

*Photo by Seth Jones*



## 2 Pole Creek Golf Club, Tabernash, Colo.

At the Rocky Mountain GCSA chapter meeting, not even chapter president Dan Hawkins (The Club at Flying Horse), Gary Hammerlund (L.L. Johnson), and Jim Wilkins (Arvada Golf Courses) could convince Gary Allen (American Pride Co-Op, in black) that real men wear pink. *Photo by Seth Jones*



## 3 Duke University, Durham, N.C.

Seth Baranyi, assistant superintendent at Brandywine CC in Akron, Ohio, took good notes at John Deere's Feedback event, but with those shades on, we're not sure his writing was legible. *Photo by Beth Geraci*



## 4 Duke University, Durham, N.C.

(L to R) At the John Deere Feedback event, engineer Jason Honeycutt and John Deere dealers Bubba Jones and Tim Boles find khakis to be the perfect complement to their conversation.

## 5 Fieldstone Golf Club, Greenville, Del.

It was hard for *Golfdom* EIC Seth Jones (right) and FMC's Gary Gold (left) to believe that assistant superintendent Charles Soper Jr. (center) had never played the course before — because he sure played the front nine like an expert. *Photo by Pat Roberts*



## 6 Pinehurst No. 2, Village of Pinehurst, N.C.

Syngenta's Bert Wagemans gives the "hi" sign while working a blower at a tee box. From the looks of it, we wouldn't be surprised if he took up greenkeeping in retirement. *Photo by Beth Geraci*



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# TOURNAMENT

# TRIUMPHS

**W**HETHER PLAYING HOST to thousands as a PGA Tour stop, or accommodating the local Kiwanis

Club's annual charity golf tournament, when your facility holds an event, things will go wrong and damage will occur. It's part of the deal. You know that going in. But there are strategies for minimizing damage, and reducing your stress, when throngs descend upon your golf course.

Superintendents say that preparation, water management, turf selection, communication and planning are the key factors to hosting a successful tournament. Here, we take a look at some of the decisions superintendents have made around the country at various events, both professional and amateur, in order to come out of a tournament smiling.

## Managing water

For the past 18 years, superintendent Rick Slattery has hosted the LPGA Tour at Locust Hill County Club in Rochester, N.Y. The club was a regular Tour stop for the first 15 years of Slattery's tenure and became the home of the LPGA Championship, a Major, three years ago.

"Today, with these tournaments, their biggest priority is a firm surface," Slattery says.

To achieve a firm surface, Slattery begins the process of reducing irrigation in order to dry out the golf course some three months before the tournament.

**HOSTING A TOURNAMENT CAN BE AN ADVENTURE. TO SUCCEED, IT TAKES A LOT OF PLANNING, AND EVEN THE RIGHT ATTITUDE.** *By Stacie Zinn Roberts*

"Dry it out as far as your turfgrass will allow, trying to lower that threshold of the turfgrass," Slattery says. "If your golf course is healthy and you've allowed it to dry down, if you get heavy rain during the tournament, the playing surface will stay firm," Slattery says.

He knows this from experience. Going into this year's tournament, the course was enduring drought conditions. Then, during tournament week, the sky opened up, dumping 3.5 inches of rain. Despite the rain, the players and officials remarked how firm the greens were and how quickly it dried.

To help manage water on his course, Slattery utilizes Rain Bird's Smart Pump central control software for his irrigation system. The software helps Slattery calculate rainfall and ET, so that he can manage how much irrigation is needed to achieve firm playing surfaces.

"It gives you a good idea of what is going on in the soil, and a pretty good idea of when to apply water," Slattery says.

The Smart Pump helps to detect drops in pressure or problems with the irrigation

system. This is especially important during tournament prep as the tents and grandstands are constructed on the course.

"Close to 3,000 stakes go into the ground for the infrastructure that goes up," Slattery says. "Most of them are two-foot stakes. I've seen pipes that have been cracked or damaged that give out later on. One time a tent company put a stake through a 3-inch main. The system detected that and shut it down without me being there."

Water management also has been an issue for superintendent Keith Wood, who hosts the PGA Tour's Wyndham Championship at Sedgefield Country Club in Greensboro, N.C. Flooding of ponds and other waterways on the course is an issue every year.

"With the August date that we have in North Carolina, we're subject to thunderstorms quite frequently and every year we've had a thunderstorm issue," Wood says. "In 2009, we never finished a round until Sunday. This year had a Monday finish. We got inundated with rain Sunday afternoon, in the middle of Sun-