



## How About A Tee Time?

By Rob Schultz

Air traffic controllers complain that they have the most stressful job in the world. They get arguments from stock-brokers, doctors, nurses, dentists and just about every profession known to man. Even sportswriters.

But there aren't any lobbyists around who can put in a good word for the golf course superintendents. A stressful job? You bet.

Golf course superintendents hear it from everybody who has ever picked up a golf club. They even hear it from those who don't golf.

The rough is too long, the rough isn't long enough; the greens are too slow, the greens are too fast. Where'd that weed come from on the 14th fairway? Isn't there something you can do about that? During a summer drought, they ask why the course is drying out. During the monsoons, they ask if you've watered too much. Then there's the Environmental Protection Agency knocking on your door every time you fertilize. The list goes on and on.

And now, I'm going to add one more to the list. Sorry guys, but some of you don't golf and I think that's a mistake.

I can understand why some golf course superintendents don't golf. After all, you spend 14 hours, seven days a week, working at the place and you don't want to spend any more time there playing a game you probably don't enjoy. There are families to attend to, a car that needs washing and, God forbid, your own lawn that needs work.

But whenever possible, I think it's a good idea to pick up some clubs and tour the facility you work so hard to maintain. It gives you a different perspective on just what needs to be done.

It also will make you seem more knowledgeable in discussions with club members who complain about something on the course. You can talk in agronomical terms until you're blue in the face, but that's just greek to most pros and members. When you can talk their own language and relate to their

problems, that's when it's easier to get your point across.

Not long ago, I mentioned something in a column in my newspaper about how poorly the cups were cut and replaced at a public golf course I sometimes play. Unfortunately, it ruffled the feathers of the course's golf course superintendent. It certainly wasn't all his fault. The course is one of the busiest in the state and gets abused like no other.

Still, if he had played the course once in awhile, he might have been more sympathetic to the cause. There are few things more frustrating than to watch a putt head straight for the hole, but then veer off after it bounces over an old, badly replaced cup. I only wrote the column because I had received several letters and phone calls from golfers complaining about it.

Golf course superintendents can argue that they don't have to play golf to understand how to cut a cup, cut the greens, grow roughs, etc. That's true, but golf is a game of subtleties and some of those subtleties can be picked up only when you golf.

Another argument can be made that picking up the subtleties is the job of the club pro. He then can discuss them with the superintendent. That's true, too. But I can't think of a better way to get along with your club pro than to play a round of golf with him once in awhile.

Throughout the round, you can go over the course hole-by-hole and mutually decide what needs to be worked on or left alone. The end result will make the pro happy; it will make you happy. I talked to one Madison pro who said the key to a successful relationship between a pro and superintendent of greens is communication. I can't think of a better way to communicate than to play golf with him. Plus, you'll probably get some needed tips on how to improve your game.

The only trouble with my argument

is when the golf pro at your club doesn't play golf. It's an all-too-common occurrence. When that happens, then I think it's a must for the golf course superintendent to play.

Whether a golf course superintendent should play golf is an argument that will probably go on forever. It's not much different than the argument pro athletes get into with sportswriters.

"Didn't you ever play pro football?" many football players ask.

"Nope," says the sportswriter.

"Then how can you possibly write about what we're doing?" they reply.

It doesn't take full knowledge of all the X's and O's to understand what they're doing, but athletes still have a point. And so do those who ask golf course superintendents to golf.

It may not help — especially if you have a 24 handicap — but it certainly won't hurt.

Now, if you can only find the time.

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ATTEND THE  
SEPTEMBER  
WGCSA  
MEETING  
AND  
HEAR OUR  
GUEST  
SPEAKER,  
ROB SCHULTZ.**

**September 14, 1987  
Mascoutin Country Club  
Berlin, Wisconsin**