



An Issue of Fairness

By Chad Eberhardt

Golf is enjoying an incredible amount of popularity worldwide. Courses cannot be built and developed fast enough to keep up with this unprecedented growth in players. Our beloved state of Wisconsin is fast becoming a hot bed for not only big name championship caliber golf courses, but for golf facilities of all types. In fact, statistics show we are home to more golf courses per capita than any other state.

All things considered, golf is very healthy these days. This situation has gained new found respect for the golf course superintendent. Today's superintendents are witnessing an increase in image and professional status. A huge boost came in the September issue of GOLF DIGEST when John Schilling, executive director of the GCSAA, was included among the list of the most powerful people in golf. It was great to read GOLF DIGEST's opinion that "golf course superintendents have displaced the club pro as the game's pivotal on-the-course employee and their earnings reflect that shift. Six figure incomes are now common for Schilling's members." Golf has become a big business for everyone.

In the past, to be a golf course superintendent, one had to truly love what he was doing because he'd never get rich at it. I would certainly hope that it never reaches the point where a person enters the profession for money only. Golf would undoubtedly suffer a huge setback into mediocrity.

I am calling upon Wisconsin golf course superintendents to maintain their focus of attention on keeping the science of turfgrass culture on pace with the rest of golf. The development of the O.J. Noer Center for Turfgrass Research is state of the art. The University of Wisconsin-Madison has as many turf students as any other four-year program in the country. It would certainly appear as though the health of our profession

has a great future in Wisconsin. Or does it?

I direct your attention to pay rates in the 1990 "Golf Course Superintendent's Report". It is quite apparent that the current state of affairs for the Wisconsin assistant golf course superintendent is grim. The average base hourly wage on a national basis for assistants is \$9.69. Wisconsin is well below average at \$8.49. For a state that prides itself as being a hotbed for golf courses and a future leader in turfgrass research, offering its own future below-average wages is ridiculous.

The UW's program will continue to grow, attract students, and produce very bright and qualified leaders in the profession. But, you see, these future leaders will look at the statistics and see that their four-year degree doesn't mean much to their own peers who should be fighting over them.

When looking for an assistant, require a four-year degree from the applicant. Four years of college education provides even footing with other professionals in our society. According to sources, by the year 2004, golf course superintendents who wish to become certified by the GCSAA will be required to have four years of college education. Many two-year schools give excellent technical training in turf management. But they lack the additional two years of college course work that provide a well-rounded education.

A graduating student, who is interested in the field of golf, is looking for a position as an assistant. And what is an assistant? Someone who assists, helps, supports and makes your life a little bit easier!

Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents, please be careful. You cannot expect to see those excellent salaries and continue to pay your future right hand men below average wages. Promote our future! On Wisconsin!

Big Jobs Call for Big John



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