



If Image is Everything, Then Superintendents Have a Problem

By Rob Schultz

Here's a look at some news items, brainstormers and brickbats that shape the lives of golf course superintendents, sports writers and, yes, all flag-waving, three-putting Americans.

WHERE'S CARL?—Here's a big thumbs down to Rex Cole, the waterlogged golf pro at Carlton Oak Lodge and Country Club in the Los Angeles suburbs. His course was nearly washed away by torrential rains and unable to host the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America national championships in January. That seemed fine to Cole.

"If (the superintendents) show up here," Cole said one week before the tournament, "we're handing them shovels and putting them to work."

Shovel this, Rex: Your insipid comment managed to place even more distance between two groups that are straining to get along with each other.

Last we heard, Cole was pondering President Clinton's invitation to join his White House team and help the country better understand his economic plan. He'd fit right in.

I can imagine Cole at a White House press conference: "If the stupid taxpayers complain," said Cole, "we'll just shovel some more taxes down their throats. What do they know 'bout the economy anyway?"

WHADDYA MEAN TUCKAWAY'S BOOKED?—Tom Strong and the rest of the Greater Milwaukee Open hierarchy are paying for their lack of foresight. They knew six, seven years ago that Tuckaway would eventually kick them out and they did absolutely nothing to secure a future site. Now they're caught without a place to hold their little PGA Tour event. Too bad, because the GMO was just starting to earn some respect.

So they're going to hold it at Brown Deer Park. (Let's pause here so we all can lay down this article and let out a nice, hearty belly laugh.) It's not going to happen without some major changes. For instance, the difference between the conditioning of Tuckaway and Brown Deer is like comparing Orlando and Sarajevo as vacation resorts.

Also, it helps if there's a place to park cars and a fence to keep the riff-raff out. (What's riff-raff? Ask Rex Cole, the California golf pro.)

And last I heard, the PGA Tour also wanted a clubhouse on the site of their events. But in the case of the GMO, maybe a decent clubhouse won't be needed since the State Open probably will have a stronger field in a few years.

Yes, it's nice to hold a pro event on a public course. But the Andy Williams-Shearson-Merrill Lynch-A.G. Edwards-Buy, Buy, Buy-Sell, Sell, Sell-Ross Perot San Diego Open at Torrey Pines is proof that the pros hate playing public courses.

DOES THE CO-PRESIDENT GOLF?—The Co-Commander in Chief on the links? Don't count on it, unless it's an all-girl thing at Augusta. Hillary Dennis Rodman Clinton is too busy working with the head of the Department of Health and Social Services, Donna Shalala, deciding who gets what doctors.

In fact, *GRASS ROOTS* spies overheard a conversation between the two women that addressed the new socialized health plan Americans may be doomed to live with soon.

Said Shalala: "OK, which doctors do the golf course superintendents get?"

Said Hillary: "Ooh, they work with that icky black stuff, that poopy stuff from Milwaukee. Give them the proctologists."

Speaking of the golf course superintendents, the GCSAA is the winner of the 1993 Hillary award. Call it male guilt, call it a brief moment of blank thought, call it a flashback from smoking Crayolas, but whatever you do, don't call giving Dinah Shore the GCSAA's top honor a brilliant move.

The GCSAA needs a fresh marketing approach that will make the Rex Cole's of this world take notice of what the superintendents are trying to accomplish. Handing out awards to Dinah Shore—best known for marrying, divorcing and still loving Burt Reynolds and lending her name to an LPGA major tournament in Palm Springs—does not help the GCSAA's image. Get with it guys.

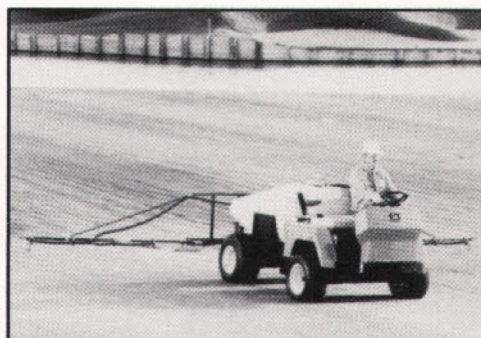
MAD-CITY ROBIN HOOD—In its infinite wisdom, the caretakers of the City of Madison's finances saw its four golf courses rake in record amounts of cash the past few years and decided to take it all to pay for some of the city programs that were losing money.

So what happens when the city courses need some cash for any improvements? The caretakers of the city's finances told those with the golf courses that they don't have any money.

Guess what happens next. You got it. The golf course committee will ask the city to raise the rates for the second straight year with hopes that they can build a new clubhouse or add a few traps this year. The rate hike will be approved, but the clubhouses or traps won't appear because, at the end of the year, the city will take away the profits again.

It's enough to make your head spin.

It's enough to make that wonderful twosome, those wonderful pals, Hillary and Donna, so proud. 🍷



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