



The Inner Cut

By Chad A. Johnson



Greetings! My name is Chad Johnson, eastern Wisconsin's sales representative for JW Turf and John Deere. For those of you who do not know me, this article will hopefully give you some insight to my background and my future. I am going to attempt to do as good a job as Wayne Horman did.

I was born and raised on my family's golf course—The Coachman's Golf Resort. A good portion of this article will relate to the business, so I will give you a brief overview. The Coachman's is located between Edgerton and Stoughton on Highway 51, about 30 miles south of Madison. What started out as my Grandfather's corner tavern in 1933 is now a 27-hole golf course, 60-unit motel, 300-seat restaurant, pro shop, gas station, driving range and outdoor pool.

My entire family is involved with the business. My mother Nira and brother Brian work in the restaurant, my brother Mark operates the pro shop, and my sisters Lydia and Kathy manage the office. My father, Eldon, passed away in '94. He was the heart and soul of the Coachman's.

I began playing the game of golf at the age of six with a 9-iron and putter. At the age of 12, I was begging my father to help with the 'chores' on the course. I

started with garbage duty and water coolers—the important stuff. By the age of 16, I had participated in every facet of maintaining the golf course.

However, since the Coachman's is a golf resort, I also had the joy of helping in the restaurant, motel, pro shop, gas station, and the outdoor pool.

These duties were great experiences but nothing (and I mean NOTHING) compared to working on the golf course. When I was 18 we began construction of a 9-hole addition. We did 90% of the work in-house—subgrading and irrigation were the only two things contracted out. Those two seasons will never be forgotten. Those 9 holes will always be a part of me. After that experience the only thing that entered my mind when people asked me about my future was taking care of a golf course.


My father was a 1953 graduate of the UW-Madison and I had been a Badger fan since the age of three. So there was no question as to where I would attend college. I attended the UW beginning in the fall of 1989. My freshman year the Badgers went 1-10 (Don Morton); boy was that fun!

The '91 season I decided to take a hiatus from the Coachman's to work for Monroe Miller at Blackhawk Country Club. It

was an educational and enjoyable place to work. I would not trade that experience for anything. The next season I went back to the Coachman's under the persuading of my father to be the golf course superintendent in training. The next year was spent trying to 'build Rome in a day' as my father would have said. I learned later that greatness is achieved over time.

I graduated in 1993; The Badgers went to the Rose Bowl, I was the golf course superintendent at the Coachman's and I got married to my wonderful wife Stephanie. It was a special year for me.

The season of 1996 was very trying with the floods! I never knew we would need canoes for the course. But the birth of my son Caleb that year made life just grand! I had a great life at the Coachman's and worked with some wonderful people. However, in 1997 I decided it was time for a change—hence the position with JW Turf. The switch from Super to Sales has been different but challenging. I have enjoyed getting to know everyone at all the courses and I look forward to being more active in the WTA and WGCSA.

Kudos to Wayne Horman for all he has done—good luck. See you next issue! 



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