

# Underdressed, Underpaid

By Jacob Schneider, 2nd Assistant Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

Baseball hats. Chewing tobacco. Hooded sweat-shirts. If I'd told you that those items were on display at one place in the Milwaukee area this spring, you'd probably guess that I was at beautiful Miller Park watching the Brewers once again destroy our lovable losers from the Windy City, and I'd be lying if I told you that I wouldn't have rather been there. However, from the short time that I've been working at Blackhawk, it appears as if Monroe isn't in the practice of sending his newest full-timer for a paid trip to a weekday series to see Prince, Sheets, and the boys against the team that hasn't won a World Series since 1908. I digress. This isn't an article about my distaste for the Cubbies (that would be way too long, and it might offend some of you who still curse Bartman every morning). No, this article is about the baseball hats, chewing tobacco, and hooded sweatshirts that were found at an industry educational seminar that I attended. Unfortunately, it's not even surprising anymore.

Even as a relative greenhorn to the industry, it's become apparent that whether it be the WTA Expo, the Symposium, or a WGCSA monthly meeting, a select few will show up in jeans and a baseball hat. I can't imagine anyone in a group of lawyers or doctors dressing that way for one of their educational events. Now, I'm not saying that we should always model ourselves after the lawyers of the world (we're way too decent to do that in the first place), but it certainly wouldn't hurt the perception of this great state's hard-working superintendents if the speakers and other guests that come in from all over the country were greeted by a group of professionally-dressed golf course superintendents..

I'm not suggesting that we should all wear a three-piece suit and tie (which is good, because I don't own a suit yet), and we all know that perception doesn't always equal reality. But, when attending these events, leave the Carhartt jeans and the Red Wing boots at the course, and make sure that the more inexperienced members of your crew who might come along do the same. Fair or not, the way that the people around you are perceived will affect your perception. In my opinion, it's awfully nice that we don't have to put on our Sunday best everyday at work, so those dress clothes are usually clean and pressed. I can just about guarantee that your greens won't die and that you won't lose your job if you show up to the Expo in a sports jacket.

In an industry that prides itself on maintaining some of the most picturesque landscapes in the state, it's hard to believe that this would even become an issue. I can't imagine that any of you would decide to not mow the greens or cut the cups on the morning of your biggest tournament of the year, and if we expect our courses to look their best during these important events, why can't we look our best during our industry's most important events? We are in a profession that not everyone views favorably and that's constantly looking to gain respectability (and income), so leave the chewing tobacco, hooded sweatshirts, hats (and steroids) to the ball players. I'd say that a bunch of green industry professionals who actually look like professionals is a winning combination (something that the Cubs wouldn't know anything about) that everyone would cheer for. 🌱



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