



Happy? New Year

By **Jacob Schneider**, Assistant Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

Call me overdramatic, but in exactly two weeks, my life will change forever. I've never been this nervous about the New Year, but this year is different. Usually New Year's Eve is just a good excuse to get together with friends, enjoy a few beverages, and act as if I won't regret those few beverages the next day. However, come 12:00 AM on January 1, 2009, I'll officially become the assistant golf course superintendent at Blackhawk Country Club, and I'm not sure if it can't come soon enough or if it's coming too soon.

It's the holiday season, and I shouldn't be worrying. The golf season is done for the year, and seven days from now, I'll be opening presents, spending some quality time with the family, and stuffing myself full of sugar cookies, fudge, spritz cookies, homemade caramels, chocolate-covered pretzels...well, you get the idea. All of my Christmas shopping is done, and I managed to avoid the insanity of the Madison malls by buying all but one present online. Come December 24, I'll have almost three weeks off due to unused vacation days from this year and a trip to Mexico with the missus shortly after the New Year. No worries, right?

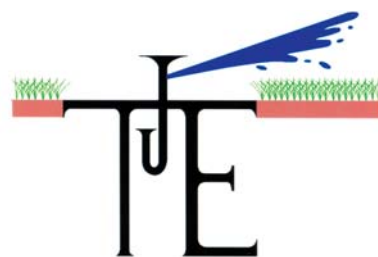
Wrong, I am worried. Although assistant superintendent sure does sound a lot better than *second* assistant superintendent and the accompanying pay raise will be nice, I'm worried about the additional responsibilities that will come with this new role. Truth be told, it's been pretty easy taking orders from one or two people since I was a scrawny teenager ten years ago. Soon, I'll be the one giving the orders to fifteen or so employees. Besides that, there will be diseases to diagnose, irrigation breaks, economic issues, and members to deal with. My palms get a little sweaty just thinking about it.

I'd like to think that I've done everything possible to prepare myself for this new role. I've worked hard under the tutelage of two of Wisconsin's best superintendents, in Scott Schaller and Monroe Miller. I was able to obtain a first-class education at UW-Madison under the guidance of Drs. Kussow and Stier. Six-and-a-half years of school should count for something, right? And, I've had a year as a full-timer at Blackhawk to learn some of the nuances of the irrigation system and to familiarize myself with spraying. Besides all of that, I'll be working with what is, in my opinion, one of the best, most-experienced crews in the state. On paper, it's a perfect situation, but I'm still worried.

All of the preparation and experience in the world won't mean squat if I'm not able to keep the course looking as great as it always has. If only Monroe hadn't set such high standards for Chad and me...

At this point, you're probably thinking that I'm a "glass is half empty" type of guy. Well, I'm not. Truth be told, I'm ten times more excited than I am worried about January 1. I guess that I like a good challenge. Besides, everything that I've done over the past couple of years has been to prepare myself for this new role. Plus, I'm sure that almost all of you had the same worries when you first became an assistant or, better yet, a superintendent, and for the most part, you're no worse for the wear. Soon, I'll be able to implement some of the ideas about course maintenance and people management that I've accumulated in school and on the job, and to me, that's exciting.

The only person that I can control for sure after January 1 is myself, and there's no doubt that I'm going to work as hard and as smart as I can to get Blackhawk looking as good as it ever has. I can't help but be excited. Hopefully, with a little luck and a whole lot of determination, I'll be worrying about my first day as a superintendent in a couple of years. 🌱



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