

# AN ARCHITECT, TO HIRE OR NOT TO HIRE

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That was the big question I was asking myself after three years of changing board members, presidents, and the same tee three times. My answer was YES.

At first I thought this was only possible for clubs with unlimited budgets. However, after thinking about it, with our total budget around \$130,000, we can't afford to waste any money on doing projects wrong.

The first thing I did was to get support from my greens committee. This was not difficult because this committee has become more aggressive toward the board in trying to convince them to spend money on improvements for the golf course instead of the club house.

I started collecting data on past projects that were done wrong and without any direction or thought. Among those projects were the tee mentioned earlier and two greens that have been rebuilt in the past ten years. One of which has been rebuilt twice and the other in need of rebuilding again.

The greens chairman and I went to the next board meeting with this data and a proposal to hire an architect. The board was very negative because of past experience. They were told an architect had designed the past greens construction. I reminded the board of the conditions of the greens now. Then I went on to explain how poorly they were built and designed by the so-called architect. Then I explained what materials should be used and the cost to construct a new green to USGA standards. I went on to explain that I am qualified to construct a green correctly; however, I am not qualified to design a green and a golf course. This is why I feel we need to hire a qualified architect to set up a long range plan.

The board decided to hire an architect so

a twenty year plan could be put together to design the golf course.

A search committee met and hired an architect without my knowledge. I feel a superintendent should be involved in this selection to set a precedent in the future.

The board assigned the greens committee to work with the architect and bring all proposals to the next board meeting. I think it is imperative that all board members understand the assignment of a committee to work directly with the architect and that no decisions would be made without proposals being approved by the board members. In my case, some board members felt insulted that they were not personally involved in the initial visit of the architect with the greens committee.

The architect's first visit consisted of reviewing the entire course hole by hole. He wanted our opinion on which holes were in need of new construction first. The architect needed a topography map and an aerial photo in order to design an overall plan. If you do not have these, check with the city or county or private developers because these can be costly to have made up yourself.

The architect submitted two plans to the board: Plan A, a twenty year plan, and Plan B, which consisted of selling lots and reconstructing a large portion of the golf course as well as generating extra income. They decided to go with Plan B. I feel this information should not go further than the board meeting until a letter has been devised and sent to the membership detailing the plan and the board's decision. However, in my case, the plan was discussed before letters were sent out resulting in misinformation and mass chaos among the members. As a result the plan was shot down before it ever got off the ground and our membership was split. The greens committee and my own credibility were severely damaged.

This was last fall. Over the past summer we have regained our credibility with many successful projects and the condition of the course. As a result we have constructed a new green and pond with the plan of an architect. We are now

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following Plan A for our long range program.

After all the problems I have experienced in hiring an architect, I still feel personally it is in the best interest of the golf course as well as the superintendent to have a long range plan to follow, instead of year to year changes with new board members.

I hope my experience will help you if you are considering hiring an architect.

## NEW TOURNAMENT

Golf course superintendents are pleased to be involved with PGA professionals, managers and presidents of the nation's country clubs in a national golf championship recently created by the John Deere Company.

The announcement was made by Riley L. Stottern, CGCS, president of the 7,000 member Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), with

headquarters in Lawrence, Kansas.

The event, the John Deere/PGA Professional-Superintendent Championship, will feature four-man teams competing in a scramble format at the 41 PGA Sections throughout the country.

Qualifying is scheduled between June and September, with the 36-hole Championship in November. The date and site will be announced later. Teams will be made up of the PGA Professional, the club's course superintendent, club president and club manager.

"It is gratifying and fitting", observed Stottern, "that superintendents are recognized as among the most important people in the game of golf. It is they who make and keep our nation's golf courses playable. Many superintendents play golf frequently not only because they enjoy the game and are good, but also because they know it is the best way to understand how to keep their courses in the best possible playing condition.

"GCSAA thanks John Deere for its

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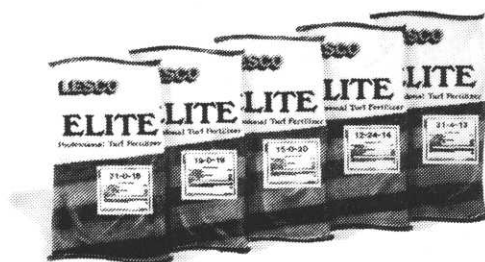
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