

FROM FLORIDA TO INTERLACHEN

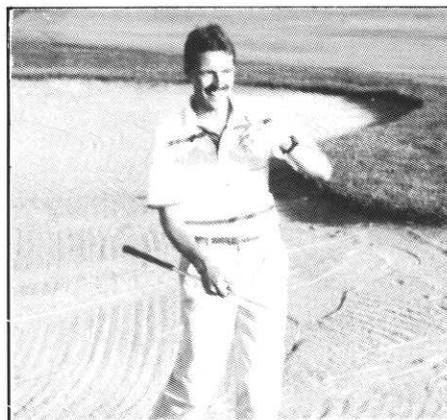
John Katterheinrich Reviews First Year in Minnesota

(Ed. Note: John Katterheinrich, who now has completed a full season at Interlachen Country Club in Edina as head superintendent, previously was the superintendent at Lost Tree, North Palm Beach, Fla. He was asked to compare his work in the North with his previous experience in the South. John rapidly has begun to "feel at home" in Minnesota. And he does play some excellent golf, as attested to by his 1990 MGCSA title-winning effort at Hazeltine.)

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After experiencing my first growing season in the cool season climate, I look back to evaluate my last six months.

As the summer progressed, I became more and more excited about the change I'd made. There's no question in comparing the beauty of golf courses between the North and South. The change of seasons, rolling terrain and the freshness of cool season grasses in the North by far exceed the natural aesthetics of the South.



I have come to realize a little different nature of the average Northern Golfer. Obviously, due to the very short season, people just want to play as much and as many times as possible. We (superintendents) must utilize our growing season to perform projects, aerate, trim trees, etc. as well as maintain top playing conditions throughout this same period.

There is, however, a great advantage in the South. Superintendents work through two seasons.

There's the growing season (May-October), with minimal play to perform the cultural practices, complete projects and groom your golf course to perfection.

You then approach November to start your playing season. That's when you basically maintain your accomplishments of the past six months.

The past season at Interlachen went extremely quickly for me. I look back and note three phases in my duties.

Start off with Spring clean-up, opening up the course by putting out all the tee markers, drinking fountains, etc. In some cases seeding and growing was necessary in areas damaged from winter kill.

I then approached June-August battling the schedule of events and the problems of simply maintaining turf during the stress months. I realize Mother Nature was somewhat easy on us this past summer.

Even so, in July and August, it seemed my average day was 6:00 a.m., grab a cup of coffee; 6:15 a.m. gas up the spray rig! Finally it was nice to see the cooler temperatures easing disease pressures and allowing time for other projects and, of course, clean-up of leaves.

After we put our greens to bed, I began to worry about the dreaded nightmare of winter damage to the turf.

Unfortunately, in some cases all the hard work and satisfaction from the previous year can change so quickly with limited control on our part.

Nevertheless, after hibernating for five months, I'm sure we'll all be raring to go next Spring. I've really enjoyed the challenge offered to me in changing climates—professionally and personally. Everyone has greeted me in a very fine fashion and made me feel welcome. I look forward to meeting more of you in the "off season."

*Thank you,
John Katterheinrich*

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