

# THE TALE OF A WANDERING MALLEHEAD ... and why to use over-sized ones

By Thomas M. Kientzle, CGCS, Superintendent of The Pines, Grand View Lodge, Nisswa

An unusual story developed on The Pines in 1991.

A 4" main broke on June 18th by our second tee, and because the pipe wasn't lined up right during installation we dug to shut off five valves to isolate the break. Then we glued on the coupling and were in the process of putting approximately 8' of pipe and a compression coupling.

I wanted to hit the 4" into the coupling with a block of wood and a hammer when I noticed there were some burrs on the pipe. I sent Jay Chaney back to get a block of wood, a hammer and some sandpaper. Well, he came back with those items, but the sandpaper was around a small block of wood to use to hold the sandpaper and a rubber mallet hammer.

It wasn't exactly what I wanted, however, we were in a hurry and didn't want to go back to the shop. Jay and I prepped and glued the 4" line to go into the coupling, and we had Jeff Warrick with the rubber mallet going to beat the 4" into the coupler.

We got everything lined up and pushed the 4" into the coupler and had about 1/2" to go, so we told Jeff to hit the 4" with the hammer until it was on all the way. He hit the pipe three times and on his fourth swing I heard a "Oh, \_\_\_\_\_!"

We looked back, and here is Jeff with the double-ended rubber mallet hammer missing one of the mallets. We weren't sure where the mallethead went, so while the glue was drying, we

dug in the mud hoping to find it. We turned every bit of dirt from the trench inside out looking for it...but to no avail.

Then we started searching below the pipe in the trench, sifting through the mud. We couldn't find it there either. Then we got a mirror and a light run by a generator to try and look back up the pipe, but we couldn't see anything. So we let the glue dry and then went to open a valve to try and flush the 1 1/2" mallet head out of the pipe.

We opened valves on either side of where we were going to put the compression coupling to try and flush the mallet head out. Neither direction worked, so we put the compression coupling together and buried the trench. That was June 18th.

On August 10th I noticed the aprons of #14 green were starting to purple. All the other aprons looked fine, and, on inspection, we found we had no water to the green. The quick coupler in front of the green worked fine.

We dug up the valve, turned the water off and cut the pipe between the quick coupler and the valve, and, yep, you guessed it, the rubber mallethead fit snug in the 1 1/2" gate for the green.

Well, for you who have played The Pines, you know how far it is from #2 tee to #14 green—probably 1/2-mile by pipe. And why did it show up 54 days later on a Saturday?

Superintendents' tip of the month: Use oversized mallet heads.

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