

Golf Course Architects Urge Developers to Involve Superintendents in Construction

The president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects has called on developers to involve golf course superintendents in the construction of their courses.

"We try to get a superintendent involved at the start of construction so he can act as a project liaison, help interpret plans for the contractor and make suggestions that will ease maintenance," said Clark. "For example, if we create a design that is difficult to maintain, he can bring it to our attention while changes can still be made."

With the superintendent present from the start of the project, it becomes easier to maintain the course according to its design, Clark said.

"Working together during the design and construction phase enables the superintendent to learn the intent of the original design," he said. "As the golf course evolves, the superintendent can help ensure that the layout remains true to the architect's original intent."

Education also enables a superintendent to become better acquainted with the purposes and perspectives of a golf course architect, Clark said.

"Being informed is 90 percent of understanding each other," he said. "The best ways to stay informed are through continuing education, attending conferences and exchanging information during the construction process."

Although few superintendents have the opportunity to be in on the development of a course from the beginning, they can always check the original plans to learn the architect's design strategy, Clark said.

"We must look to the superintendent to make sure we don't forget that the golf course must be maintained," said Clark. "We sometimes need to be reminded that a slope we've designed has to be mowed twice a week."

Architects also depend on the superintendent to monitor construction progress. "The superintendent has a lot of authority during construction," said Clark. "The contractor has to realize that he must satisfy the superintendent."

It's also important for the superintendent to be on site so he sees what goes underground, he said. "In particular, he needs to oversee the installation of the irrigation system and confirm that the greens, for instance, have exactly four inches of gravel, two inches of barrier layer and 12 inches of mix. When we leave a course, it's in his hands."

Remodeling projects offer an ideal opportunity for superintendents and architects to work together, Clark said. "One of the first things we do during a remodeling project is get the superintendent and pro together to ask what they would suggest be improved," said Clark. "They are the ones who are there every day, so they know the course's strengths and weaknesses. We utilize this type of input to develop the master plan which is the blueprint for the project."

—OGCSA Newsletter

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