



INSIGHT

One Superintendent's Perspective

By Tom Proshek
Brackett's Crossing Country Club
Lakeville, Minnesota

Background

Established in 1965, Honeywell Country Club was built for the Honeywell employees.

Honeywell Country Club changed to Brackett's Crossing Country Club in the early 80s (name came from early pioneer mail carrier by the name of J.J. Brackett). We currently have a wood carving of J.J. Brackett located by the tee on hole number 7.

Well I'm been working in the golf industry for 24 years with 14 years as a Superintendent. I grew up in New Prague and worked at the course during high school/college years. I attended the University of St. Thomas, majored in Human Resources Management with a minor in sports: I played football at St. Thomas (quarterback) and yes I'm still

picking slivers out of my rear end. I received my Turf Degree from Anoka Tech College and took on my first Supt's job growing in Wildflower Golf Course (Detroit Lakes). For the last eleven years, I'm been Superintendent at Brackett's Crossing Country Club and loving it.

Why and how did you enter the turf management industry?

I got into the field for many reasons such as the love of the game, working with environment, working with people (sometimes challenging), office consisting of 180 acres and don't have to wear a suit daily.

Who was your professional mentor?

Over the years too many to name, and

the list is growing yearly. However, if I had one individual to label it would be Larry Vetter. When I was green in the field, I was Head Superintendent at Wildflower Golf Course and being just out of turf school, I of course had questions. Larry was the seed salesperson for the job and we had some interesting potential happenings that were being proposed for the job. I contacted Larry with my concerns and he had similar thoughts. The most impressive part is that he got in his vehicle from Minneapolis and drove to our course (4 hours) to attend the meeting with me. Now that impressed me to no end and to this day I haven't forgotten that (Larry may have, but not me). Thanks again, Larry.

Highest Point

Growing in a golf course (Wildflower). Seeing it go from a native piece of land to seeing newly planted seed emerge into a full-blown course.

Lowest Point

My first year here at Brackett's Crossing we had our lovely high

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temps and dew points attaching us and I was not being a great Superintendent and scouting as I should have been. Well you may know where I'm going; yes, we lost most of our number two green to Pythium.

Are your greatest challenges political, agronomic or managerial?

I truly believe it's a combo of them all. Personally the one that I really could do without is the political one.

What is the most difficult disease to manage on your course and how do you?

375 experts (members) informing you daily on how to make things better (I'm sure you all can relate) or how it should be done. As far as diseases, they all can be very difficult if you're not out scouting and I learned my lessons years ago. Great assistants and workers help scout daily and I've been blessed with great people

over the years.

Is it hard to find good help in your area of the state?

I've been fortunate to have great people working for us. I have a mix of high school, college and retired gentlemen that make up our staff. My weekend staff consists of males and females that enjoy working at a golf course to get a change of pace from their Monday to Friday jobs. (Of course they enjoy golfing privileges).

Do you have a dog on your crew?

I do have a two-year-old chocolate lab named CC (chocolate chip). My one assistant Ken Adams has a black lab named Lu Lu and my other assistant Arik Hemquist has a yellow lab named Baily.

Where will our industry be in 10 years?

Hope I'm still in the field for one. I suppose more licenses to perform just about all tasks on the course. Example, we may need, plumber's license to install

irrigation pipe after a break on the course. Computers will be a huge part by means of operation of equipment. I also believe with more and more homes being built adjacent to courses, the complaints will continue to rise, leading to restrictions in my opinion on starting times among other restrictions.

What is your perspective of our state association and what would you change?

Not to sound like a broken record but I truly believe each individual needs to help out in any part of our association to help it continue to grow. This can range from being a board member, member of a committee, informing your membership of our professionalism.

Name your fivesome, who would you like to play golf with and why?

Clint Eastwood (love the western movies), Matt Kenseth (love NASCAR), will see him at the race in Texas in November, Belinda Jensen (Meteorologist), Arnold Palmer (legendary golfer) and myself.

Get Answers. Call.
Relax.
Repeat as necessary.

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