



Within the Leather

by David Kazmierczak, CGCS

What a glorious day it was on Tuesday, August 13th 2013. The kind of day any golf course superintendent would wish for if hosting an event. Luckily for me and my crew, this was the day we hosted the MGCSA Championship.

Not that the weather was much different than the previous couple weeks. If you are into high temperatures in the mid 70's and low humidity coupled with glorious sunshine, Minnesota has been right up your ally lately. But compared to what the day could have been like, the weather just could not have been better to prepare a golf course for tournament play, or to play in the tournament itself.

My group started on the 10th hole, and after a quadruple-bogey on the 11th I pretty much decided to hell with it- my championship pursuit lasted all of about 15 minutes - and proceeded to relax, enjoy the fine company I was with and enjoy the day. As fun as it was to play, what

happened after was better.

I can't imagine a more satisfying feeling as a professional, as I experienced after the tournament, and that is why I am bringing this event up. After the round, I received many, many compliments on the course itself, the conditioning, the set-up, the friendliness of the inside staff and numerous other things. We have received these kinds of compliments before at various times and in various ways, but this was quite special.

This was from my peers.

This was from guys for whom I both respected and admired. Well wishes from old friends and new acquaintances alike. This was from people who know golf courses. This was from people who understand what it takes to accomplish a solid product in this business, and took time out of their busy schedule to come play our course and support the MGCSA as well. What a fine time we all had.

Now I would be remiss at this point not to mention the fact that there were only 48 of us that were able to play in the championship. This number, to be frank, is quite low. I fully understand why so many

were unable to attend. I heard among the reasons airification, vacation, cost, out of town, prepping for a tournament of our own, etc. They are all good reasons to not participate in an event such as this. But let's face it- 48 players is a pathetic number, especially in an association of our size.

When I first heard the number of attendees the day before, I must admit my heart kind of sank. We were working hard to prepare for the tournament, put out best foot forward and when I walked into the pro shop and said we only had around 40 participants, I felt like a complete idiot. We reserved an afternoon for 40? It wasn't said and our pro never would, but that is what I was feeling. I decided after walking out of the pro shop that the number didn't matter at that point. We were going to do what we could to make the course the best it could be and whoever showed up was going to get our best effort.

While it is clear more needs to be done to attract more attendees to the MGCSA events, or at least figure out why attendance is so low, that is not what I wanted to focus this column on. What I wanted to tell you is how much I appreciated the 48 who did attend.

I'm sure if you ask any superintendent who has hosted an MGCSA event they will all tell you

the same thing- what a great time it was hosting the event, and how proud they were to have their crew prepare the course, and how good it felt to help the MGCSA. I know I sure did.

It really didn't take that much extra effort either. We certainly spit shined a few tee plaques we otherwise would not have, and got a few long put off superficial projects done as a goal for the event, but otherwise business as usual. The pro shop certainly didn't have too much extra work with the smaller number, and heck they do tournaments all the time anyway.

So what I'm trying to get at is that if you were ever inclined to host an MGCSA event by all means go for it. The return on your effort is substantial. It doesn't really matter if you get 48 or 148 to attend, for the guy hosting the feeling is the same. I was humbled, I was proud, and I would do it again in an instant.

Thank you so very much to the MGCSA for allowing me, my staff and our course to host this year's championship. To all who came, especially the guys who came from a great distance, thank you for making the day very special for us and Prestwick Golf Club. I will never forget it.