



EDITORIAL

Well, midwinter is here and so are its problems. As the picture with this month's editorial shows, our job really is a 12 month a year job. With pictures like this published in the local papers, how can we be expected to maintain our golf courses to survive the winter?

The biggest headache in the summer comes from disease or moisture, right? It is clear beyond doubt in anyone's mind then that the biggest headache or ache in other parts of one's anatomy in the winter is the mid-season thaw.

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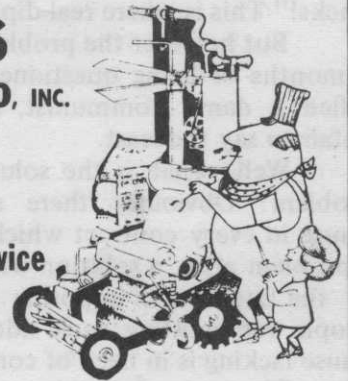
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That is the time of the year when the greens are too wet to play by the superintendent's standards but are in fine shape as far as the grill room agronomists are concerned. In fact, a certain percentage of them pull some pretty shady deals, to say the least. They fight, bite, kick and scream if, after two feet of snow melts, that the entire golf course is not open including regular greens and all. Times like this certainly try the superintendent. We are overprotective and a stubborn power-mad punk if we keep the course closed and we are a lazy unconcerned bum if we open it. What do we do? How can you argue with the highly educated member who tells his buddies: "So what if we play regular greens? In two weeks you'll never even see the tracks!" This is where real diplomacy should come in.

But however the problem is handled, we face 2 or 3 months of being questioned, cussed, mistrusted, and called a damn communist, all of which seem rather unfair to say the least.

Well, what is the solution to the course closed problem? Obviously there should be an arbitration clause in every contract which simply states that should a problem arise, a solution will be reached by mediation by the super, the opposing faction, and two neutral people representing each side. Any contract with this clause lacking is in need of correction.

There are alternatives to this particular problem. The first one is to try and maintain a solid relationship with the greens chairman and other club officials and cooperate with each other for the mutual benefit of both course condition and the golfers.

The second is to keep all the greens closed through the entire winter. This could cause a lot of dissention, but it is a definite solution.

The third is the most drastic, but it seems to be what a lot of club members want. That is to leave the entire operation plan open for play all winter. Needless to say, this is a rather ridiculous idea, but it is a possibility to keep peace in the family, so to speak, even if it would only be in the winter.

The best solution though is to maintain good member relations through education whenever possible and to get the backing of all the club officials. Remember, without them behind you 100%, you're as good as had!

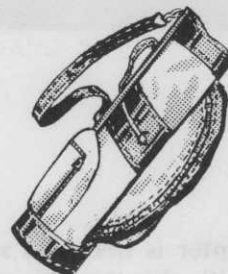
There are 4 requirements for success in being a superintendent:

1. You must have a strong back.
2. You must have a weak mind.
3. You must have a thick skin.
4. You must have a good sense of humor.

D.L.M.

BIG SPEAKER FOR BIG HITTERS

Tom Doerer from Ft. Belvoir Golf Club missed the first day of the conference in Houston. He had a good excuse though. He was in Baltimore speaking before the Eastern PGA group on the role of the superintendent in the golf course operation. Tom was asked to address this annual school for the big hitters and having seen a copy of his talk, there is no doubt that it was a big success. It would be interesting to know what questions Tom had asked of him.



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