

An Open Letter to Young Agronomists

I would like to take this opportunity to review a few comments expressed by some of the speakers at our recent conference in Baltimore.

Being a superintendent for a little less than a year now, I was particularly interested in the remarks of Paul Boizelle and Bob Shields pertaining to the roll of the younger turf students coming into the golf maintenance profession.

I entered the 2-year turf program at the University of Maryland under the guidance of Dr. Hawes in 1971, along with a small group of people who are still in this area today as assistants or superintendents. I can't speak for all of them but I know a few of us were very anxious to complete our studies and jump right into Golf Course Management. The sciences and principals we learned from Doug Hawes and other fine professors was an excellent platform from which to build from, however, I don't believe I or others realized that it was just that, a good platform or scientific background. Upon entering the real world of the golf course you suddenly realize there is a lot more involved basically, good practical experience where you get an opportunity to apply your education to practical usage.

Paul Boizelle expressed his distraught at the fact some of the younger people were taking jobs on their own or working under superintendents who had not developed

to the peak of their potential or ability - this I am quite sure is the case in many instances throughout the country. I wholeheartedly agree that whenever possible one should strive to work for two or three years under an experienced, competent superintendent. I, myself, was fortunate enough to work under Bob Shields at Woodmont, for which in the coming years I will be extremely appreciative. The young assistant on his way up might not realize it at the time but there is a hell of a lot to learn from the experienced men in this profession. Bob Shield's advice to the scholarship recipient at the Baltimore meeting was the same given to me, and numerous others who have been through the apprenticeship of this profession. It was always stressed to me that you had to feel a part of the ball game, give your own ideas to the superintendent, come in and discuss things with him often, stay ahead of things and treat the course you work on as if it were your own. These, and many other tidbits of advice should not be taken casually by the student or assistant because they come from weathered experience and knowledge. The things learned in the first few years of the real world of the golf course might well shape your career more than you will know at the time. The time will come someday when you will jump into the frying pan of your own course and if you haven't listened well, and taken your education, and applied knowledge from everything you've learned from others, it well might be a long road. In the coming years I will see for myself and so will many of the rest of you.

Whoever the young student works for - absorb everything you can, ask your superintendent to take you out to visit the Shields, Bidwells, Cammarotas, Thompsons, Dieters, Heiliens, and many, many other experienced men in this area, or any area in the country. I truly believe what you will learn from these men, and others, will aid you greatly in the first summer on your own. I know I just completed mine, and thank God I had the opportunity to learn from these type of men. I sincerely hope that all young turf students will take the advice of experienced men and profit from it, so they in return can pass it on to others in the coming years.

Joseph Emanuel
Superintendent Tantallon Country Club

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