

## You Can Always Find Someone To Agree With You So Do Rock the Boat

By Dave Doherty

A very good friend of mine, a gentleman that I've worked with for over 15 years recently agreed to a five-year contract as director of golf at a prestigious southeast Florida golf course.

My friend is leaving a very successful business that he has built up over the years, due in part to his wife's health condition and his age. His travel involving trips out of the country, planes, rental cars and hotels gets a little old when one is in their early sixties.

When we first met and started working he was the director of golf operations at one of the country's leading and best known golf courses.

My friend's new course, built in the mid-80s, has two year-old greens that are not performing very well. There have been two superintendents in those two years.

At the time that the decision was made to rebuild the greens, the board apparently was told that the greens would not need to be aerified or need any other disruptive agricultural practices, because they were being built to USGA specifications / recommendations.

What a shame that this type of nonsense is regularly circulated in order for someone to make a buck, and with total disregard for the future of the course. I expect my friend will bring the greens around, and in a year or so, they will be what the members of the course had expected in the first place.

None of us in the industry enjoy disruptive procedures and if we look deep enough and long enough we can find information stating that disruptive procedures are not necessary on greens that are built to USGA specifications.

A quick check with the USGA Green Section would have provided information to this club's board that all greens need maintenance performed on them whether or not they built to USGA specs. / recommendations. This club's board members found someone who told them what they *wanted* to hear and they went with it.

It seems that the individuals who questioned this *unlikely* utopia were told that they were being overly cautious and delaying the rebuild process. Don't rock the boat, they were told.

Recently an ISTRC associate and I attended a meeting at a golf course to discuss specification details that needed to be placed in the bid document to start the bid process of rebuilding 18 greens.

An architect whom I have worked with on other golf course projects over the years presented an initial routing plan to the committee for review, and to get an idea of what could be done within the boundaries of their project's approved funds.

There were questions asked and issues discussed, and although the answers were not always what the course representatives wanted to here, the answers were honest based on many years of experience.

The architect and his partner, who between them have over 50 years of experience and a tremendous reputation, explained the reasons for each detail in the routing plan they were proposing.

My ISTRC associate stands out as one of the country's leading authorities on green mixes, bunker materials and drainage. Our group speaking to this club represented over 150 years of in the field, real life, and real world experiences.

Player safety, drainage, turf type, green's mix, bunker sands, gravel layer [USGA] or no drainage gravel [California] were among the matters we discussed, and last but not least it was explained that maintenance would be involved and required to maintain the new greens.

If it sounds too good to be true it normally is. Take your time and do your homework before investing in a rebuild project. Do not rely on just the one source that gives you the answers that you want to here. *Rock the hell out of the boat!*

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