

Who's Got Your Back?

By Dave Doherty

Recently a golf course superintendent called to tell me he had been dismissed from all duties that morning.

I'm familiar with this golf club, and the heat had affected the greens this year. The superintendent was unable to bring them around until after the heat let up at the end of summer.

By that time the members' concern had taken its toll on the board, green committee and general manager. It was irreversible.

I asked the superintendent if the GM *had his back*. His answer? *Yes*. The GM allowed the superintendent to resign and was also working on a severance package for him. Both men maintained a high level of respect for each other and the dismissal of the superintendent was done in a professional manner. There was not a right or wrong and it was not a good-guy, bad-guy situation.

But it was a decision and action based on the circumstances over an extended period of time and all parties understood why the action was necessary.

I wrote about "*Four-Way Management*" in the Boardroom, September/October, 2015 issue, and I can say this situation was handled with "*Four-Way Management*."

The job of being a GM or superintendent is a very difficult one. At no time is every golfer or board member happy with both the condition and the management of a golf course. We all face criticisms and stress every day in our lives, however there are very few professions where the scrutiny is as intense and constant as in trying to maintain or manage a golf course property.

For a golf course superintendent to try and maintain the best playing and esthetically pleasing conditions, without the GM having his back to explain to the boards and golfing members exactly what he is doing and why, is a lost cause.

The GM must have the superintendent's back to maximize the effectiveness of his resources and produce a course that everyone is proud of and can enjoy.

The same can be said for the GM except to a greater degree. The general manager needs to understand what the superintendent is doing and why, in order to keep the board and committees informed.

The GM needs the superintendent to have his back as well and both of them should be on the same page. The GM must **also** have the support and understanding of the club's different committees, and they too should have his back.

Fact is, very few of us are able to succeed without someone having our back.

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