

Superintendents: A New Breed of Politicians




Josh Cooper

Background

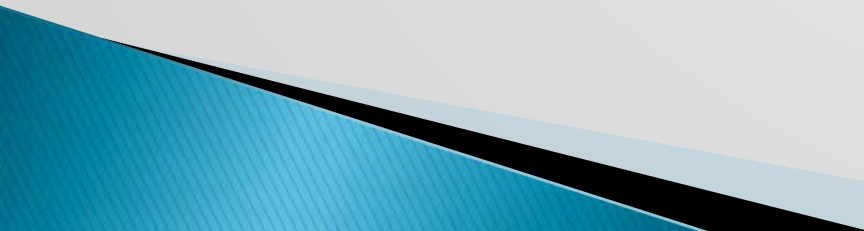
- ▶ Graduated from UT–Knoxville in 2008
- ▶ Senior Assistant at Victoria National Golf Club in Newburgh, IN from 2009–2012
- ▶ Currently the GCS at Currahee Club in Toccoa, GA



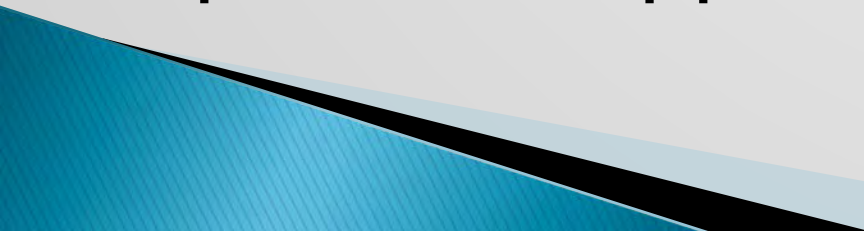
What are Politics?

- ▶ Any issue that is debatable and forces people to choose sides
 - ▶ Relationships
 - ▶ Information and communication
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Internal Politics

- ▶ Issues and relationships within your club
 - ▶ GM, Greens Committee, Golf Professional
 - ▶ Example: golf course rules
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External Politics

- ▶ Issues and relationships with those outside the staff of your club
 - ▶ Members, guests and public course patrons
 - ▶ Examples: course conditions and rules, aesthetics (i.e. trees, native, etc.), environmental concerns, pesticide applications
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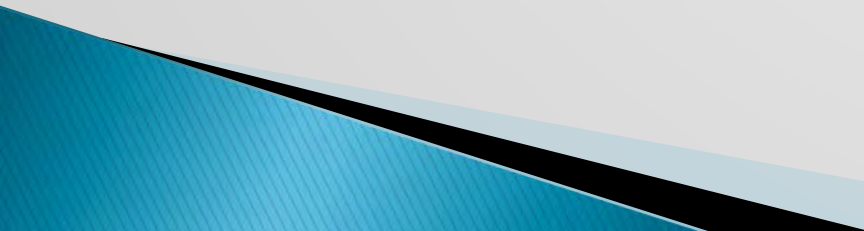
The Tree

- ▶ Problematic cottonwood on #1 tee at Victoria National
- ▶ In competition with tee box
- ▶ Littered the tee box
- ▶ Roots very destructive to mowers

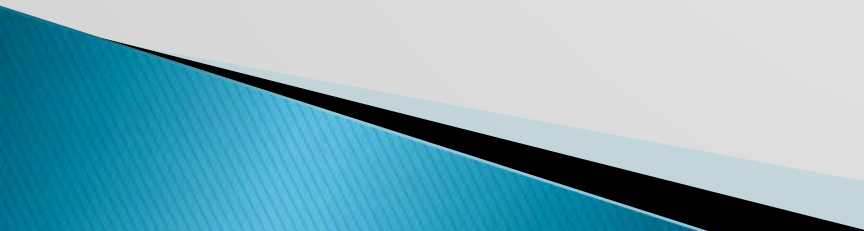
The Solution

- ▶ Couldn't just cut it down
- ▶ Brought the GM's attention to the problem
- ▶ Plan of action
- ▶ USGA Report
- ▶ The perfect opportunity
- ▶ No fall out
- ▶ Keys to successful mission: gaining support and timing


Politics at Different Facilities

- ▶ Always a factor, regardless of type of facility
 - ▶ The Victoria Tree issue would've been handled differently at a different course
 - ▶ Varying degrees of politics at different types of facilities
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Importance of Playing the Game

- ▶ Politics vs. Agronomic Skills
 - ▶ Everyone knows agronomy, not everyone can play the political games
 - ▶ The longest tenured superintendents are the best at playing the game and tend to be “likeable” people
 - ▶ Crucial to long term success
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Ideas for Political Success

- ▶ Communication is key
 - ▶ Educate through communication
 - ▶ Develop quality working relationships with colleagues
 - ▶ Educate other staff members
 - ▶ Educate club members
 - ▶ Do not avoid people or issues
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Questions or Comments

Thank you for your attendance
and attention

