



Back row: Scott Ramsay, *Golf Course Superintendent*;
Mike Moran, *Master Gardener*; Vin Capobianco,
Senior Gardener; Ed DeFrank, *Groundskeeper*
Middle row: Carmine Ferraro, *Gardener*; Larry Mingione,
Gardener; Rob Colonna, *Groundskeeper*
Front row: Jim Burgh, *Senior Equipment Technician*;
Peter Gagliardi, *Gardener and Shop Steward*

FROM “LANDMARK GONE ASKEW” TO “THE NO. 2 COLLEGE GOLF COURSE IN THE WORLD”

In September 2003, *Golf Week* characterized the Yale course as “a landmark gone askew.” In September 2004, the same writer in the same publication ranked the Yale Golf Course as “the No. 2 college golf course in the world.”

How was this dramatic turnaround accomplished in just a year? It all started with a meeting between University and Local 35 representatives that “wasn’t pretty.”

“At the first meeting, we couldn’t even agree about why we were sitting down,” recalled Mike Moran, Master Gardener. “Was it a best practices meeting? A golf course meeting? Nobody could agree.”

“The second and third meetings were more of the same,” echoed Scott Ramsay, who came to Yale as Course Superintendent just a year ago when outsourcing the entire operation was under discussion.

“But we kept working at it,” Moran continued. “When union and management all realized we had a common goal, it allowed us to arrive at where we are today. We all agreed this is a treasure of a golf course.”

Local 35 Shop Steward Peter Gagliardi added, “A lot of it had to do with trust—Tom Beckett, the Athletic Director, gave us his word that our jobs would be protected.”



The key issue was how many people were needed to keep up the golf course. “Eight Local 35 members could not keep up with the golf course no matter how hard they worked,” Ramsay explained. In the meeting room Ramsay wrote the number 23 up on the board. The University had concluded that was the number of people needed to take care of the golf course in the critical summer months. The question was, who should those people be?

The team broke the logjam when they figured out how to employ both student athletes and an alternative workforce of University employees, such as dining hall staff, whose jobs weren’t active during the summer. The additional workforce not only performed well, but it also allowed the core unit to operate more efficiently and to focus on higher-level maintenance issues and improvements. The results were dramatic, as *Golf Week’s* rating attests.

“Now the light is on us. Alumni have been supportive. Local 35 has been supportive. We’re not done here – it’s all a work in progress,” said Moran. “This was not without conflicts or rifts, but everybody gave a little and it turned into a beautiful thing.”



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