

# The First Tee

Where we go from here

by Scott Atkinson, President, NGCOA Canada

Is there an issue that overwhelms you from time to time? Do you feel that you just don't mean enough to your suppliers to get their best price or service? Are there some organizations that seem too large to take on by yourself?

All of the above have occurred to me from time to time, and I'm sure to you as well. However if you are a member of the National Golf Course Owners Association Canada you have found considerable relief from those uncomfortable feelings.

In assuming the leadership of this organization I've been giving some thought to where we go from here. My vision for this organization is to see us build on the excellent foundation which has been laid to date by my predecessor Mark Seabrook and his fellow Board members. You only have to think about what they have achieved in five short years.

Revenue Canada - too large an adversary? Not last year when this organization coordinated with our fellow golf associations and won a favorable ruling on entertainment tax deductibility at your clubhouses.

Can't access the same discounts as large multi course operations? Now you can with the ever growing partnerships that your Golfmax is creating on a monthly basis: the 4.5 cent scorecard from Dollco Printing, the lowest price for any quantity from Spalding, the manufacturer's rebate from Yamaha after you have cut your best deal, the wholesale fertilizer from Nu-Gro, the superb property and liability insurance program from Royal Insurance and now the OnTrak program for food and beverage which, I can tell you from personal experience, is going to be HUGE!

This may all seem too good to be true? Well sometimes it seems it is. That's why I'm involved, as are all the other board members. Our goal is to make sure that Golfmax keeps growing and that the organization is strong and mobile so that we can convince the government that our green fees should be a deductible business expense just like NHL, CFL, NBA, MLB or ski tickets. Owners need to have an organization that can quickly respond to any issue that unfairly threatens our livelihood, as well as present opportunities to improve our profitability.

As board members we can't do it all by ourselves. All of us have to all think about how we can ensure the health of our organization. For example, as members can convert our neighbour down the street. In the west where I live, we've made a great start in spreading the word. But now it's time to push to the next level.

Every time I get the chance to discuss the advantages of the NGCOA Canada, I get so excited that people ask me "what's in it for you, a commission or something?" My response is a very simple one. Before I was a member I felt very isolated and very much at a disadvantage. I felt very frustrated by the inability to challenge issues that needed to be challenged.

NGCOA Canada now boasts 560 members. Is 1,000 possible in two years? Yes. Can this organization continue to provide benefits to you? Absolutely! Is there a benefit in singing with one voice? You bet! We've come a long way together and we can go much further.