

British Columbia Provincial Update

This stretch of the season always seems to sneak up on me. The days are long enough now that everything feels urgent again, expectations climb quickly, and the margin for error quietly shrinks. The adrenaline of spring start-up has passed, but summer hasn't quite arrived to reward the effort yet. It's usually around here that leadership feels less like a title and more like a responsibility you carry home with you.

I've been thinking about that a lot lately while rereading *Leaders Eat Last* by Simon Sinek. What has stuck with me this time wasn't a big, bold leadership statement. It was a much simpler idea — that good leadership is less about directing work and more about creating an environment where people feel safe, supported, and valued while they do it.

That feels very familiar to life on a golf course.

Our teams operate in conditions that are rarely comfortable. Early mornings, tough weather, equipment breakdowns, member expectations, and the reality that when something goes wrong, it's public and immediate. In *Leaders Eat Last*, Sinek talks about leaders taking responsibility for the conditions their people work under — not removing challenges but buffering their team from unnecessary stress and standing beside them when things don't go to plan.

Some days that looks like making a hard call so your assistant doesn't have to. Other days it's backing your technician when the answer isn't convenient, or reminding the crew that a bad setup, bad bounce, or bad weather day isn't a reflection of their effort. It's rarely dramatic, and it never shows up in a job description, but it's the part that matters most.

I was reminded of this recently when I watched a crew quietly push through a frustrating day — nothing catastrophic, just one of those days where everything takes longer than it should. Nobody complained. Nobody asked to leave early. They just worked. As leaders, it's easy to get caught up in checklists, targets, and timelines, but moments like that remind me that trust isn't built during meetings or performance reviews. It's built when people know their leader sees the work, understands the pressure, and has their back when they need it.

Sinek writes that leadership sometimes means being the last to eat, making sure everyone else is okay before worrying about yourself. In our industry, that metaphor feels pretty literal at times. It's checking in with your crew while you're still running behind. It's answering one more question at the end of a long day. It's absorbing pressure so it doesn't cascade downhill.

And while it can be exhausting, it's also what makes this profession so meaningful.

Across British Columbia, and the country, I see incredibly strong leadership in this industry — not just from superintendents, but from assistants, technicians, and senior crew members who set the tone every morning without thinking twice about it. That kind of leadership doesn't come from a book alone; it comes from experience, humility, and a genuine commitment to the people beside you.

As the season ramps up, I'd encourage you to pause once in a while and reflect not just on course conditions or progress photos, but on the culture you're creating. The surfaces matter, the details matter — but the people doing the work matter first. When that part is right, everything else has a much better chance of falling into place.

Leadership on a golf course isn't about eating last for the sake of appearances. It's about making sure the people who show up every morning know they're supported, trusted, and appreciated — especially on the days when the job feels heavy.

Those are the days leadership counts the most.

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