

Keeping Upkeep Down

With grateful acknowledgments to the U.S.G.A. Golf Journal (April 1968 issue)

This is an era of rising costs and do-it-yourself projects. Among the rising costs are those relating to golf course maintenance. This same golf course maintenance has been singularly missing from the list of do-it-yourself projects.

It shouldn't be. Here is an opportunity for the golfer to help keep down the cost of playing the game. If each player were to help in even a small way to lighten the burden on the golf course superintendent's crew, the crew would then be able to use its time more profitably on other projects.

The cost of course maintenance is rising dramatically. Five years ago the normal maintenance budget for clubs in the Metropolitan New York area was about \$65,000 to \$70,000. Today the same clubs are spending from \$85,000 to \$90,000 for the same purpose.

Much of the increase is in higher prices for materials. However, a considerable part is the increased cost of labor. It is in the labor area that the player can help reduce or at least slow the rate of escalation of his club's budget.

Just how can the player help? What, specifically, can he do?

The Golf Journal asked staff agronomists of the U.S.G.A. green Section for their views on this subject. Following are their replies:—

MARVIN H. FERGUSON, Mid-Continent Director—The Pinecrest Country Club of Longview, Texas, instituted a plan several years ago whereby members might help with golf course upkeep.

The membership was divided into 18 groups; each group was assigned the responsibility for one hole. They were asked to pick up the bottles, cans, and scrap paper on "their hole" when they played it, to repair ball marks on the green, to see that the bunkers had deep footprints raked, and, if time permitted, to pick up a few weeds out of the green.

The system led to a consciousness of

upkeep, and each player began to police his fellow-golfers. We understand that the system has worked quite well. It's the old story of many hands making a difficult task easy.

ALEXANDER M. RADKO, North-eastern Director—Leave the course in better condition than he found it after a round of golf—how? By practising the three R's of player etiquette—

Rake traps.

Replace divots.

Repair ball marks.

Then go one step farther: take care of your own and then *one more*. Soon there will be no more one mores to take care of, and this will free the regular crew for many man-hours for other grooming and maintenance duties.

Labor being what it is today, the golf course superintendent also needs all the member help he can get. Your course can only be better for it if everyone does what is expected of him. The player normally takes great pains to do all these things when he is a guest at another club. Why should he neglect his own club?

Once the course looks immaculate, you'll find that every member will not only strive to keep it that way but he will take pride in doing so. There is a close analogy between good grooming and player etiquette which reflects in your golf course. Every player should carry a scratch handicap in player etiquette. Living by the three R's is the first step in that direction.

HOLMAN M. GRIFFIN, North-eastern Agronomist—Golfers help the course most by simply being considerate. A considerate golfer will never damage the course or any equipment in a fit of temper, nor will he litter the course and mar its appearance for the golfers who follow him. Consideration costs nothing, yet saves a great deal of time and maintenance money.

A considerate golfer obeys the signs on the course and club rules as well as

the Rules of Golf. He makes upkeep of the course more economical by not creating costly problems which must be corrected, and by not doing those things which are quite senseless in a civilised society. In this way a golfer can help without expending any effort at all.

Of course, pride of membership or consideration for his fellow-golfer and the course become uncontrollable, a golfer may wish to fix his own ball mark as well as one or two others, pick up a candy wrapper in his way rather than move it to one side, or some other such small act which will not only aid the economy of course maintenance but will also show that he cares about his status in the human race.

JAMES L. HOLMES, Mid-western Agronomist—This subject should be constantly considered by golfers, because player carelessness is a major problem.

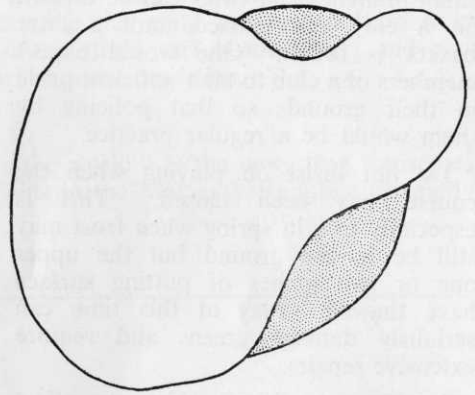
The most important practice from the economic standpoint is raking bunkers after use. The cost of maintaining bunkers represents a surprising percentage of the grounds budget. The more neglectful the players, the more time required by the work force to keep traps in trim.

When there are cart paths, they should be used. Do not insist on driving with one wheel off the path or missing the path entirely if you do not feel like using it. Do not follow in tandem. Avoid areas where it is obvious that

continued cart use is destroying turf. Do not insist on using carts when the Chairman of Green Committee or the Superintendent has said it is unwise or has made efforts to close the course to cart use. Carts are damaging to turf even when used properly.

Approximately 200 Square Feet:

4 minutes to rake	\$.18
7 rakings per week	\$ 1.31
35 weeks per season	\$45.82



Approximately 400 Square Feet:

10 minutes to rake	\$.374
7 rakings per week	\$ 2.618
35 weeks per season	\$91.63

Repair ball marks on greens. If a ball mark is not repaired shortly after

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it is made the grass on the spot will die, and will interfere with putting for some time to come. Repair of ball marks is grossly neglected by players. If the player does not repair his ball marks, they must be repaired by the work force. This can require more time than mowing the green.

Do not be a "litter bug". The player should not only refrain from littering but also police the course while playing. This is especially if the player is using a cart; pieces of paper, bottles, small branches and twigs can be thrown on a cart and carried until a litter basket is found. One would expect members of a club to take sufficient pride in their grounds so that policing by them would be a regular practice.

Do not insist on playing when the course has been closed. This is especially true in spring when frost may still be in the ground but the upper one or two inches of putting surface have thawed. Play at this time can seriously damage greens and require extensive repairs.

In summary, things which can affect the economy of upkeep from the players' standpoint center around personal integrity, personal cleanliness and simple conscientiousness regarding the beauty and the condition of the course.

WILLIAM H. BENGLEYFIELD, Western Director—There is hardly a golf course that does not print a "Please Replace Divots" line on the score card. I doubt if 50 per cent of golfers heed the admonition. If properly done, divot replacing would not only improve the course but also save maintenance dollars.

An even greater money-saver would be for each golfer to repair every ball mark he causes on greens. If he doesn't do it, a paid workman must, and he can spend up to 10 hours a week at the task. In reality, this amounts to 20 hours a week because he is losing an equal amount of time in NOT accomplishing another job he might be doing.

Then there are all the other admoni-

tions for golfer co-operation:—

1. Do not walk off with tee towels.
2. Avoid scuffing greens with shoe spikes, putters, flagsticks.
3. Always rake bunkers after use.
4. Every litter bit hurts.
5. Keep all carts (hand carts and electric carts) away from greens, avoid wet or worn areas, and keep on cart paths wherever provided.
6. Refrain from standing on tee benches and irrigation hoses, and from beating on tee markers. Spike shoes take a terrific toll.
7. If a sprinkler must be turned off in order to make a shot, be sure to turn it on again when you leave the area.

Great expense is involved when maintenance workers must stand by waiting for the golfer to make his shot. If the players want to save maintenance costs, they should not insist on shutting down a putting green mower every time they approach or hole out on a green. The same holds for fairway and tee mowing. Non-productive time is expensive and it is really costing the club "double time".

Perhaps the two best ways to save money in golf course maintenance operations are:—

1. Employ a course superintendent who is a good organizer and knowledgeable in his field.
2. Among all players, develop a pride in the golf course and its fine condition. Each player should be considerate of his course, and have a willingness to correct others showing any less degree of appreciation.

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