Is this the Twilight Zone or the Third World?

Reflections of 'vaccationing' super at the top of the world

By GORDON WITTEVEEN

KATMANDU, Nepal — My vacation in Nepal was meant to be just that: a get-away-from-it-all month without golf courses or superintendents. The combination of a radically different culture and the clean mountain air would surely cleanse my brain and remove the cobwebs. A fresh outlook and a deeper appreciation full of life in general would surely result.

The adventure had started with a trans-Atlantic flight to London and a continuation to New Delhi, the capital of India. From there it was just an hour and a half to the top of the world. We landed here in exotic Katmandu. The name of Nepal's capital had intrigued me ever since my first geography lesson on Asia. Actually, the place is a bit of a disappointment. There are no cats in sight; instead, it is loaded with dogs. I suppose if it was called Dogmandu no one would go there.

On the way from the airport I got blurry-eyed from a speeding taxi view of a small red flag in a vacant field but immediately banished the words "golf course" from my mind. I had made a sacred vow to stay away from golf courses. Two days later, after visiting five temples and three museums, Iluckily I decided to leave the group and headed for the Royal Nepal golf Club. It was noon time on a warm, sunny day in November when I climbed a fence to have a closer look at the grass. Imagine my surprise when the first green I came to was not green at all, but red. The tees were small, elevated and rectangular. They had recently been top-

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Harvard plans design courses

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — Harvard University Graduate School of Design will offer five summer courses related to golf course and resort planning and design. The course work will include Golf Course Environmental Considerations, July 31 to Aug. 1; Golf Course Design, Aug. 2-3; Golf Clubhouse Design and Site Planning, Aug. 4-5; Golf Course Environmental Considerations, July 31 to Aug. 1; and Golf Course Design, Aug. 2-3; and Golf Course Environmental Considerations, July 31 to Aug. 1;

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Instructors will include course architects Geoffrey S. Cornish and Robert Muir Graves; course architect Dr. Michael Hurdzan and environmental scientist Dr. Stuart Cohen. In addition, golf development consultants Barbara Hanley and Pamela McKinney; and developers Van Tengberg and Garth Chambers will offer their insights.

For more information is available from the Office of Development and External Relations, GSD, Harvard University, 48 Quincy St., Cambridge, Mass. 02138; 617-495-1680.

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Nepal: where greens are black & golf is — well — something new

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dressed, evidence that a greenkeeper must be around somewhere.

I nosed my way to the clubhouse where I was met by Mr. Spacharya, the manager, who welcomed me and gave me a guided tour of the premises.

The Royal Nepal Golf Course is just nine holes and only 2,600 yards with four par-3 holes. In spite of these modest qualifica-
tions, Royal Nepal is the best of the three courses in the entire country. There are mostly diplomats and Western visitors, but more and more native Nepalis are taking up the game.

Five of nine greens are sand but recently four greens have been converted to grass. This is a cumbersome process. There are no machines and all the work is done by hand. The sub-grade is spaded and raked, then the top mix is carried in by basket or wheel barrow. Progress is slow and it may take more than a month to rough grade a just small green. But time is plentiful and labor is cheap since the workers earn just a few rupees a day. Women do much of the work. They toil in the fields, carry heavy loads tied to their foreheads, and have boards of children, while frequently the men play cards and smoke the water pipe.

Once the new greens are established, explained Mr. Spacharya, the maintenance of the golf course becomes more complicated. Last year the club appointed a supervisor to direct the workers on the course. One of the biggest problems is to water the new greens. There was no money for pipes or a pump. The only other way was to carry the water from a small stream to the greens. Sturdy workers carried two 5-gallon pails on a yoke and splashed the water on the grass.

The club had recently purchased an English walk-behind greens mower. It was their proudest possession and it was stored in the clubhouse for safekeeping. A small rotary mower rounded out the equipment inventory.

"How do you cut the fairways?" I asked. Mr. Spacharya patiently took me back out on the golf course and introduced me to the herdsmen who was in charge of the mowing machines: a dozen hungry cows who splattered fertilizer as they nipped the grass. But time is plentiful and labor is cheap since the workers earn just a few rupees a day. Women do much of the work. They toil in the fields, carry heavy loads tied to their foreheads, and have boards of children, while frequently the men play cards and smoke the water pipe.

There were few golfers out on this particular day, but all had caddies to carry their clubs. Each golfer was also accompanied by a ball boy who keeps an eye on errant shots. Even poor golfers rarely lose their balls on this course. If a ball boy does a good job, he may eventually become a caddy and also have an opportunity to play in the annual caddy tournament.

Golf has a future in this small faraway country. "Does the King of Nepal play golf?" I asked Mr. Spacharya.

"When he was Crown Prince he would come out occasionally, but now that he is King he is obviously too busy," explained my host understandingly.