

An open letter on water use

By Robert L. Sanders, CGCS, City of Prescott, Arizona

A key word used in the "Publisher's Point", GOLF BUSINESS, March, was "adequate". The entire sentence read: "How do you plan to conserve and use less water while trying to maintain adequate playing conditions."

First we must define adequate. Or possibly adequate is not the correct

word. It should be remembered that golf did not originate on perfect turf. Maybe we should get "back to basics" and play the game as it was designed. Someone once said, referring to the touring pros, that they would tee up the ball on concrete if the money was right. Possibly we as golfers and golf course superinten-

dents must educate other players to accept for the first time in many years a course "commensurate" with nature. Play the ball as it lies. Remember "rub of the green". Stop trying for the absolute perfect set of conditions in which to tee up the ball to shoot 100.

Not being a low handicap player it is common for me to visit many areas of a course. The course where every blade of grass is the correct height is a beautiful thing to see, play, and I am sure, be a member of, as well as a great source of pride for the players and the superintendent. And this is, of course, possible if the players are willing to pay the price. However, we might remind ourselves that all of us are not playing for checks with five figures before the period. It is granted that each game we play is very important to us, as it should be. However we might remind ourselves that five years ago gas was 40 cents a gallon, a high water bill was \$10.00 and a high interest rate was 9%. Things change and all change is not bad if the attitude of the person is good. And as I said I am accustomed to playing all the golf course and therefore using all the clubs in my bag. This is fun. It is as it should be. The highly manicured course where the player consistently hits a driver, high iron and putts may not be as much fun for some of us.

It is my belief that if we do get somewhat back to basics and be commensurate with nature we will use less water. Fairways may be off-colored green and possible mowed a little higher.

Roughs may be native grass and a little taller. Rule 17-2 of the Rules of Golf states, "The player is not of necessity entitled to see the ball when playing a stroke". Greens may be fertilized less, mowed higher, verticut more often, spiked on a regular schedule and watered less. It might be necessary for us to learn the pitch and run instead of going full tilt, all out for the flag stick. Course fertilization for greens, tees and fairways might utilize more organics, and spiking of all play areas on a regular schedule along with aeration with hollow tines.

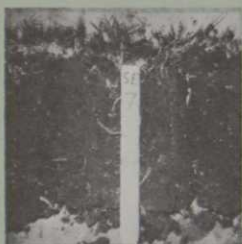
These are but a few of many ideas that might then get us back to basics as golfers and superintendents. It will utilize less water, cost less, and in one superintendents opinion get us back to golf as pure golf. **GB**

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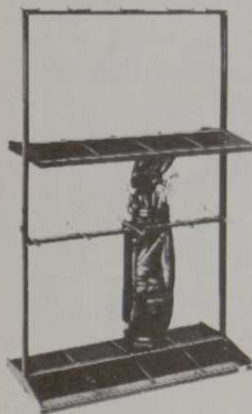
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