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Shutterbug Part 2

Last month I discussed the many advantages of including a camera within your inventory of turf maintenance equipment. Questions facing you now are which camera is best for the golf course? How much will it cost? Who pays for the camera? How do you put the camera to good use without creating a lot of additional work and general inconvenience?

The first question is which camera is best for the golf course? Without hesitation, I would only consider a 35 mm, as this is a versatile and compact camera. Within the 35 mm category, another choice is to be made, as there are two distinct types, SLR and rangefinder - viewfinder. The SLR (single lens reflex) provides a view through the lens and has lens interchangeability, a nice but expensive luxury, unnecessary for the majority of your needs. The rangefinder-viewfinder 35 mm has but one fixed lens and the viewer composes pictures through a window frame and not directly through the camera lens. This rangefinder-viewfinder is a more compact and simpler camera, which still provides for quality pictures under all lighting conditions. Both negative and slide pictures are available with this type of camera.

Other than the 35 mm camera a polaroid camera is of great value to the superintendent. The value of an instant picture outweighs the disadvantages of handling the large clumsy camera. The polaroid gives you instant pictures (vandalism, etc.) that are easy to pass around for viewing — most of your 35 mm pictures will be color slides, requiring a projector and screen for viewing. Ideally, you should have both the 35 mm and the polaroid.

The second question is how much should you spend? Like everything, you get what you pay for; at least this was the case before inflation. A 35 mm camera can cost anywhere from \$30 to well over \$1,000. Your ultimate cost will depend upon overall quality and automation. The main mistake to avoid is to not forgo lens quality for automation. Automatic features such as a built in light meter, drop in cartridges, etc., are nice to have, but always keep in mind the lens is the heart of the camera. The lens is what produces quality results, not all the extra automatic frills. A simple 35 mm of good quality will take abuse and require little attention, and will be reasonably priced. Expect to spend \$75 to \$100 for a camera that has lasting quality with enough versatility to be useful on the golf course. Another point to consider; don't purchase anymore quality than you want to keep lying around your truck or office — you will be reluctant to make the best use of the camera if you are too concerned about protecting it from abuse.

The third question is who will pay for the camera? Some superintendents assume the expense of a camera, film and processing; others purchase a camera and the club pays for the film and processing, and still others have the club pay for the whole works. There are distinct advantages and disadvantages to each way of obtaining a camera for the golf course. I find the ideal method is compromise. I've had the club purchase a polaroid for quick black and white pictures, while I purchase a 35 mm for color slides. The

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club pays for poloroid film and I pay for the 35 mm film. I still benefit from the use of the poloroid for pictures for publication reports, etc., and retain ownership of all slides I take with the 35 mm. If you go the route I did be sure the club carries insurance for your camera if you keep it at the club.

Finally, how can you put your camera to best use? There is but one way and only one way to make a camera produce results, and that is to keep it with you at all times. Put the camera in the vehicle you use for yourself and leave it there. Build a little dust box for protection if you have to, but keep it in the vehicle at all times. A camera in the office will do you no good because you will never go back for it when a picture is needed. Secondly, many good photos include action or movement, men working, etc., and you will effortlessly capture the action on film if you only have to reach a couple of feet for the camers.

To further simplify picture taking on the golf course I would like to conclude this article with some helpful tips on quality picture taking that I have learned the long and hard way — thru experience and mistakes.

GUIDELINES

1. Do not jerk camera when tripping the shutter.
2. Compose the picture mentally before looking through viewfinder.
3. Preset either lens speed or aperture before shooting.
4. Don't over focus — your eyes won't adjust to quick in and out focusing.
5. Bracket your exposures if in doubt — take three shots.
6. Keep a filter and lens shade on camera to protect lens.
7. Hand held shots — use no lower shutter speed than speed of lens (i.e. 50 mm lens = 1/50 second).
8. Take light reading from grass if in doubt of camera settings.
9. Keep horizon straight and in upper third or half of frame.
10. Make good use of 35 mm 1" x 1½" rectangle to compose best picture.
11. Use a familiar size item to show size relationship in pictures.
12. Store camera and film away from direct heat and dust.
13. Use a neck or wrist strap — never hand carry camera.
14. Use only one film — don't switch around.
15. Discard bad slides after first editing.
16. Label and date your boxes of slides.
17. Store your camera in a plastic bag.
18. Make annual master log of photos to simplify future use.
19. Keep extra film on hand.
20. Don't hesitate to take pictures — 35 mm slides are cheap.

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