

N.G.F. Research Update

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At the recent GCSAA Conference and Show in Orlando, the National Golf Foundation presented its research findings from a survey they conducted entitled, "Golfers' Attitudes and Perceptions Regarding Golf Course Conditions, the Environment and Superintendents." Results were obtained from contacting 1500 Golfers nationwide. The 1500 golfers were selected from the 30,000 people that the NGF surveys annually in its sports research work. These 1500 golfers represented all facets of golfers from the casual player to the very committed golfer and from both the public and private club golfer.

I will not attempt to give all the results from this survey. A complete report will be presented in the next few issues of Golf Course Management magazine. This article will simply highlight some of the more interesting facts developed by the survey.

Q: *How do you view the golf course superintendent?*

- A:** 56% Facilities manager
46% Skilled blue collar worker
19% Business person
6% Didn't know
2% Unskilled, uneducated worker
- Q:** *What responsibilities does the superintendent have?*

- A:** 88% Manages golf course
37% Responsible for environmental conditions
22% Courses' landscapes
19% Person who mows greens
11% Person who manages the golf facility
- Interestingly, only 76% believe the golf course superintendent to be responsible for conditions on the course.

62% believe the superintendent is best equipped to teach golfers about ecology and conditions on the golf course.

Q: *Given that superintendents are responsible for course conditions, why does a golfer choose to play a particular course?*

- A:** 72% Cost/price of green fees
68% Availability of tee times
69% Quality of course conditions
44% Closeness to home
33% Course design

Q: *What conditions on a course do you find most bothersome?*

- A:** (From most to least bothersome)
Ball marks on greens

- (But they will fix them)
Poor tees
Inadequate drinking water on course
Poor bunkers
Rough too high
Greens too slow
Surfaces too wet

The above question was answered by all 1500 golfers. The following responses were taken from only the avid golfers:

- A:** (From most to least bothersome)
Poor bunkers
Recently aerated greens
Ball marks
Poor tees
Frost delays

In regards to golf and the environment: 90% of golfers believe in protecting the environment, whereas only 87% of non-golfers hold this view.

42% of golfers support spending money to protect the environment; 42% of former golfers hold similar views, while 38% of non-golfers support spending money on the environment.

The survey indicates that many people are neutral about the value of golf courses and their "pollution" effects!

The above is just a quick sampling of some of the survey results. As mentioned earlier, the complete survey results can be found in upcoming issues of GCM magazine. ■

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