

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED WHAT'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?

OPINION ON UNREASONABLE EXPECTATIONS

Golfers are well known for making comparisons. They seem to take pride in telling anyone who will listen how a course down the road does something this way or that. They compare budgets, acreage maintained, soils, grass types, green speed, the amount of labor, and many other facts. Sometimes the comparisons are accurate, sometimes not.

Let's take this comparison one step further. It's not really valid, but it is interesting nonetheless.

Baseball: A .250 batting average is just that - average. A ball player hits safely one at-bat in four. A "star" bats .300, and an immortal like Ted Williams bats .400. If you are keeping score, and you should be, that's four out of ten.

Basketball: Superstars shoot just over 50% from the field. They shoot a ball into a hoop at a distance of zero (a dunk) to 18-22 feet or more.

Golf: A par round of golf is normally about 72. Golfers who consistently shoot less than par are found on the PGA Tour, making lots of money. Golfers who shoot consistently over par are found everywhere, and includes those people making the comparisons. The average handicap in the country is 18. The average golfer, therefore, shoots about 25% over par.

At what percentage do golf course superintendents produce quality turfgrass? As a basis comparison, golf course contain about 30 acres of fairways, 2.5 acres of greens, and 2.5 acres of trees. This equates to about 100,000 sq. ft. of greens and tees and 1,320,000 sq.ft. of fairways. Thus, if a superintendent "bats" .400, which would put him in great company in baseball, it means your superstar would lose the equivalent of 10.8 greens and tees out of 18. On fairways, he would lose about 18 acres of turf.

While this .400 batting average might get you into the Baseball Hall of Fame, you would probably lose your job as a golf course superintendent.

All of this may sound ludicrous, but the fact remains that golfers have set such high standards for their golf course that maintaining these standards for their golf courses that maintaining these standards is difficult, expensive, and sometimes impossible to achieve. To keep alive every blade of grass on every green, tee, and fairway regardless of the conditions, and not being willing to accept anything less, is wishful thinking and a mistake.

Everything cannot be perfect on every golf course every day. Even if it were possible, what would it cost?

So, look at your golf course. My message to course officials reading this opinion is not to be so concerned if the golf course

superintendent bats only .998. After all, this equates to losing about 200 sq. ft. of turf, a 10 ft. by 20 ft. area of greens or tees and 2,640 sq. ft. of fairways, or .06 of an acre.

Anyone who bats this percentage or better deserves a pat on the back, not a kick in the pants. After all, what other industry which deals so closely with Mother Nature can boast a 99% average or better? Not many.

Therefore, the next time you read about a professional athlete making \$2,000,000 a year to achieve only a 30% batting average, be proud. . .because golf course superintendents are batting 99% or better.

As seen in the September/October 1990 USGA Green Section Record

HELP WANTED

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OR EXPERIENCED MAINTENANCE MAN

AMERICAN GOLF CORPORATION

SAN BRUNO PRACTICE CENTER

SEND RESUME TO SAM SINGH

100 GOLF COURSE DR.

ROHNERT PARK, CA 94928

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT:

CONTRA COSTA COUNTRY CLUB

SEND RESUME TO: CARL KING

CONTR COSTA COUNTRY CLUB

801 GOLF CLUB ROAD

PLEASANT HILL, CA 94523

415-687-9880

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

RIDGEMARK GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

SEND RESUME TO: RICK KEY

3800 AIRLINE HWY

HOLISTER, CA 94523

408-637-8151

SUPERINTENDENT WANTED

OLD BROCKWAY GOLF COURSE

NORTH LAKE TAHOE

SEND RESUME TO:

BOB COSTA

LAGUNA SECA GOLF CLUB, INC.

10520 YORK ROAD

MONTEREY, CA 93940

408-373-0881