

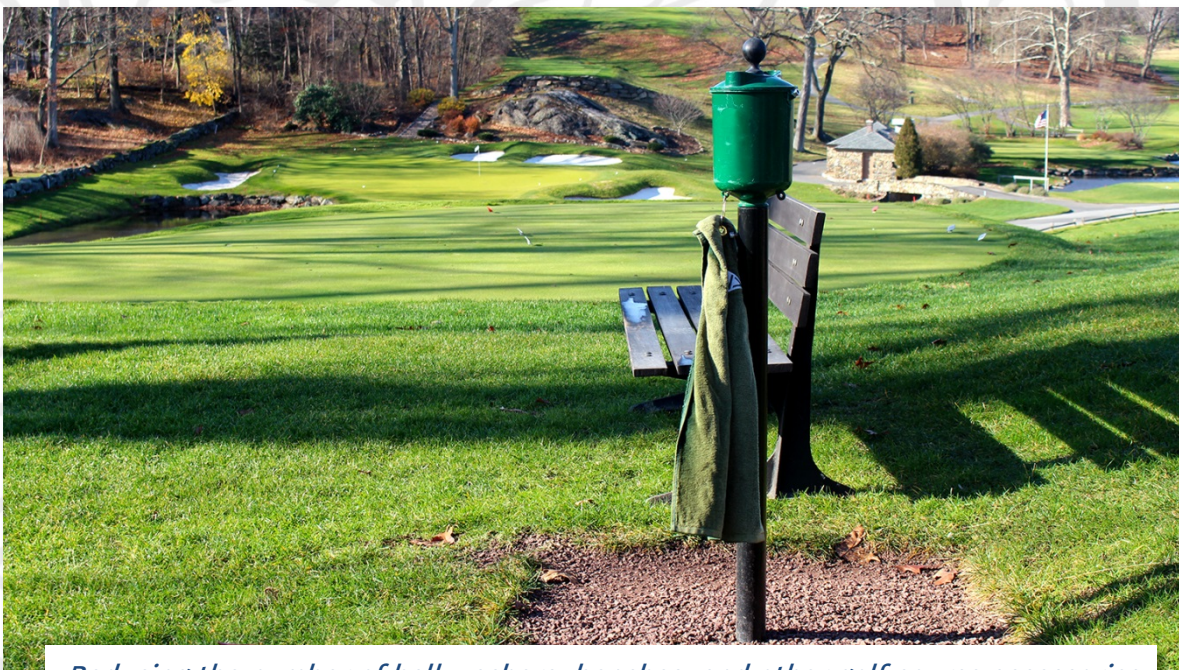
Eliminating Golf Course Accessories Saves Time And Money

Westchester Country Club—West Course
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Issue

Many golf courses have accessories such as ball washers, benches, trash receptacles, divot mix containers, and tee caddies located throughout the golf course. These items are intended to be conveniences, but they are also expensive to purchase and time consuming and costly to maintain. The West Course at Westchester Country Club had many of these man-made accessories, along with numerous ornamental plantings. These features increased maintenance costs, diverted labor hours away from primary playing areas and gave the course a cluttered appearance. Furthermore, observation showed that some accessories were rarely used. For example, few golfers used ball washers but they are among the most costly course accessories to buy and maintain. Westchester Country Club wanted to reduce the time and money spent on course accessories and direct those resources back into maintaining the golf course.



Reducing the number of ball washers, benches, and other golf course accessories saves resources and can improve turf conditions and golf course presentation.

Action

The green committee approved removing the majority of golf course accessories and ornamental plantings on the West Course, tying the removal process into a tee renovation project. Accessories, plantings and unnecessary paths were removed during the renovation, and were not replaced after the project was complete. A hybrid tee system was also developed that reduced the sets of tees from five to three. This decreased the number of tee markers that had to be moved and maintained by the maintenance staff and made it easier to spread out wear on the tees.

Results

Reducing the number of accessories, ornamental plantings and paths on the West Course has been extremely beneficial. Eliminating unnecessary accessories and plantings saved a significant amount of money and labor, reduced the need for rope and stakes to manage traffic, and improved turf quality. The biggest benefit, however, is the improved appearance of the golf course. Eliminating man-made clutter has made the course look bigger, more natural and much cleaner. The annual savings associated with removing each type of accessory are as follows:

Ball washers

- 180 labor hours saved on sanding and painting
- 120 labor hours saved on filling and cleaning
- 48 labor hours saved on trimming and cleaning around them
- 32 labor hours saved by not bringing them in for the winter and putting them back out again in the spring
- \$1,500 saved on purchasing replacements and parts
- \$1,500 saved on purchasing washer fluid and tee towels
- Total annual savings: 380 labor hours and \$3,000 for replacements and supplies

Benches, Tee Caddies, Divot Buckets

- 434 labor hours saved by not moving, trimming and cleaning daily
- 120 labor hours saved on sanding and staining
- 16 labor hours saved by not bringing them in for the winter and putting them back out again in the spring
- \$2000 saved on replacement costs
- Total annual savings: 570 labor hours and \$2,000 for replacements and supplies

Tee markers

- 30 labor hours saved by moving two fewer sets of tee markers
- 16 labor hours saved on sanding and painting
- \$1,000 saved by recycling surplus markers
- Total annual savings: 46 labor hours and \$1,000 for replacements and supplies

Red stone and mulch paths

- 72 labor hours saved on raking and repairing washouts
- Red stone no longer required
- Total annual savings: 72 labor hours and \$500 for material

Tee caddies and divot mix containers

- 80 labor hours saved on sanding, repair and painting

Flower beds

- 150 labor hours saved on maintenance
- \$4,000 saved on plant material
- Total annual savings: 150 Labor Hours and \$4,000 for plant material

Rope and Stakes

- 620 labor hours saved through reduced rope and stake use

Total Annual Savings

- 1,918 labor hours and \$10,500 for materials and supplies

The success of this program depended on effective communication with golfers. Not only was it important to explain the benefits of removing course accessories, staff also had to field questions and listen to concerns. The absence of ball washers was a hot topic, but the staff was able to explain that in most cases golfers find a way to clean their ball prior to putting anyway, so there is limited benefit to having ball washers available and the costs are significant. There were also some concerns about bench removals and several were replaced at tees where golfers frequently have to wait. After a few minor adjustments, most golfers came to appreciate the changes and the fact that valuable resources could be shifted away from maintaining course accessories and focused on maintaining the golf course.