



They Need Time To Get It Done

Golf courses can be very busy, but providing time to complete necessary maintenance will lead to greater overall golfer enjoyment.

Golfers want their course available when they want to play. Closing the course or delaying play for maintenance is never popular. Golfers feel inconvenienced when their course is closed and facilities lose revenue when golfers are unable to play. However, providing adequate time to complete essential maintenance tasks is critical for presenting a well-conditioned golf course that meets expectations on a consistent basis.

When thinking about the time it takes to complete golf course maintenance tasks, we are really focusing on labor hours. Every maintenance task requires a certain amount of labor and equipment to complete in a given amount of time. If the timeframe shortens, more employees and equipment will be required to achieve the same level of course maintenance. If the available labor or equipment decreases, more time will be needed to complete the same tasks or fewer tasks will be completed. There is a direct link between time spent on maintenance and golf course conditions, there is no way around this concept.

So, how can maintenance and golfer access be balanced? Superintendents can track the labor hours required to complete specific tasks. With this information, starting times for golf and maintenance can be coordinated so that maintenance is completed ahead of play, when staff can work most efficiently. Using a tee time system makes it easier for maintenance work to proceed ahead of play because it takes time for golfers to make their way through the entire course. "Shotgun" events require maintenance to be completed in a tighter window because all holes will be occupied simultaneously when play begins. Good communication between pro shop personnel and the maintenance department is imperative for scheduling maintenance according to daily starting times and special events.

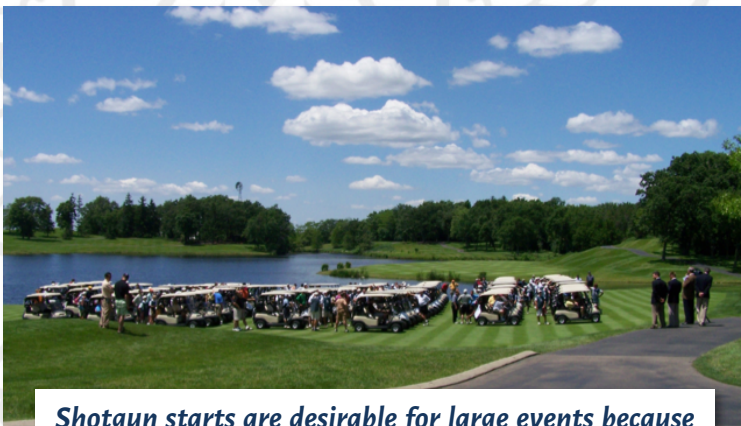


Double mowing is a common strategy used to increase green speeds, but this practice requires additional time to complete ahead of play.



Important practices like morning watering should not be compromised by the golf schedule. Water management can be the difference between healthy and dead grass.

Golfers can do their part by respecting daily starting times. Maintenance operations are carefully planned. Although teeing off on the fifth hole to get ahead of groups on the first few holes may seem inconsequential, it could interfere with overall course maintenance. Once maintenance is bogged down by golfer traffic, efficiency is dramatically reduced. This causes a domino effect throughout the day, potentially keeping important tasks from being completed. If this frequently happens, overall course conditions can suffer.



Shotgun starts are desirable for large events because they allow participants to start and finish at the same time, but the maintenance staff needs additional time to have all holes prepared before play begins.

Providing a place to play golf is every golf course's primary purpose. No golf course was built solely for the purpose of maintaining it. However, if expectations are to be consistently met, there must be a clear understanding of the time required to conduct necessary maintenance practices. Striking a balance between golfer access and the time available for maintenance will lead to better overall golf course conditions.