

Green Section Record

REGIONAL UPDATE

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Are course accessories attractive accoutrements or money sinks? You make the call.

WHAT NOT TO DO THIS WINTER

BY DAVID OATIS | REGIONAL DIRECTOR, NORTHEAST REGION

One of the most common questions superintendents get asked during the off-season is, “What do you do all winter?” The number of tasks performed during the off-season is too long to list here, but high on the list of priorities are continuing education, staff recruiting and training, and planning for the upcoming season. Course and facility improvement projects can also devour a tremendous amount of time, energy and resources. Fortunately, superintendents frequently use the power of social media to let golfers know what the maintenance staff is up to when there isn’t any golf to be played. If you haven’t ventured into using social media to help your operation, the off-season is a good time to investigate whether it may be worthwhile for your situation.

Tree work, irrigation repair and updates, and course construction projects frequently occur during the shoulder seasons. Equipment also must be maintained, and the off-season presents a great opportunity to tear into more involved equipment-repair projects. Roads also must be maintained and plowed if it snows, and storms may leave behind undesirable debris that requires removal. Most important of all, agronomic programs for the upcoming season must be planned.

Some courses spend countless labor hours cleaning, repairing, sanding and painting course accessories only to spend even more resources moving them onto the golf course where they must be regularly moved for mowing and maintained throughout the season. Depending on the volume of accessories, cost of repair parts, maintenance, and regular replacement can become sizable annual financial and labor commitments.

Before you jump into the accessory maintenance and repair process, consider whether the expenses associated with course accessories are truly worthwhile.

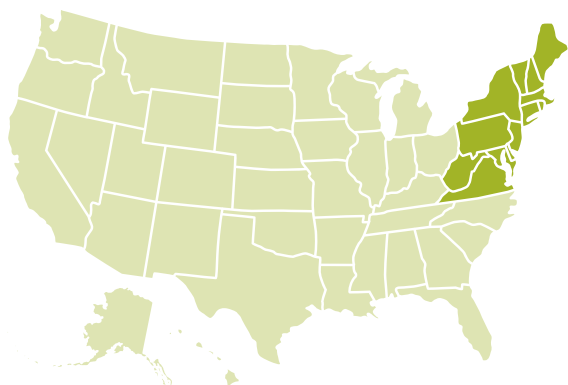
Many courses are unnecessarily burdened with the maintenance of course accessories that contribute little to golfer enjoyment and whose real costs rarely are accounted for accurately. As such, a growing number of courses have either already eliminated accessories or are in the process of doing so. The visual impact of having a less-cluttered course and the savings in maintenance dollars and labor hours are increasingly difficult for courses to pass up.

Also, before you tear into maintenance of your intermediate rough mower this winter, take a hard look at whether maintaining intermediate rough at your course makes sense – you may be able to save resources and improve aesthetics at the same time.



For information
on the USGA's Course
Consulting Service
Contact the Green
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