

**THE BULL SHEET, official publication of the
MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE
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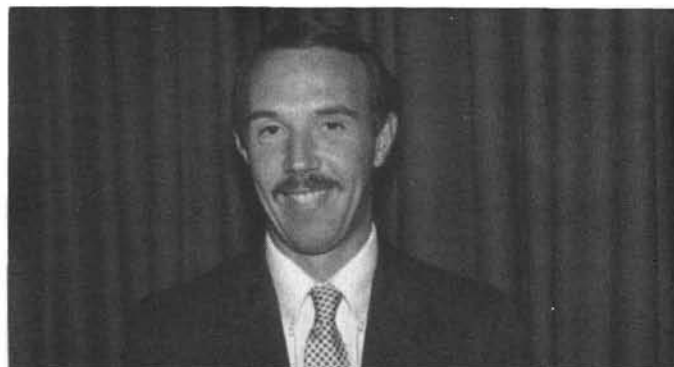


President's Message

by Dave Meyer

Editor's note: The President's Message may appear next month, maybe ...

Director's Column



When Will They Ever Learn?

by Bruce R. Williams, CGCS
Vice President

There seem to be a number of situations that we deal with at our golf courses that golfers will never understand. Many of us might turn blue in the face repeating comments at our clubs but there are several situations that never seem to be understood. It reminds me of the lyrics in a Peter, Paul, & Mary song, "When will they ever learn".

Carts are not good for the golf course. There is no doubt that carts are good for the golfer and good for profits. This does not address the fact that compaction is caused by increased usage of golf carts. The more compaction we have the weaker the turf quality and subsequently the need for more aeration. Golf carts are a strong part of the game and we must take that into consideration when designing a golf course and establishing maintenance procedures. Twenty years ago we didn't have the problems created by carts. There were no cart paths, no curbs, no need for ropes, and no need for directional cart signs. When you consider the cost of cart paths, including installation, maintenance, and replacement, it is not an inexpensive proposition. We also have the added costs of sodding and seeding areas damaged by carts as well as increased daily maintenance costs. Possibly the profits of golf carts are not as great as we think when you take all things into consideration.

(cont'd. next page)

Monday golf has a negative effect on the condition of the golf course. It's not hard to understand that course conditions are not helped by opening golf courses for play on Mondays. Many courses are opening for outings. Some are open to employees, caddies, and invited guests. Some golf courses will have more rounds played on a Monday than any other day of the week. One day a week the golf course needs a rest whether or not the golfers do. Monday is a day to accomplish a number of projects important to the upkeep of the golf course. Many of these tasks need to be accomplished without the interference of players. New regulations for re-entry periods after pesticide applications may dictate that courses will be closed by law on Mondays.

All golf courses are not created equal. Each and every golf course has been designed and built differently. There are many factors to consider including soils, topography, and turf types. It is very difficult to compare the budgets of golf courses without knowing the specifics of each club. Each club has a different philosophy for the maintenance of the course and the budget should reflect the standards set forth by the club. When it comes to golf course conditions and budgets to compare is a mistake.

We have been preaching about these same topics for years with our sermons falling on deaf ears. In the best interest of the game of golf let us hope that clubs no longer use the philosophy of "tell me what I want to hear". As golf course superintendents, we are charged with the responsibility of providing pleasurable playing conditions at our golf courses. If clubs start to listen to what their superintendents are saying then they will begin to learn what is truly for their golf course.

Enthusiasm for Golf Continues Across Nation

JUPITER, Fla. — The popularity of golf in America continues to grow at a remarkable rate, according to the latest National Golf Foundation report.

The report, *Golf Participation in the U.S./1989 Edition*, also shows that six states lead the nation in enthusiasm for the game.

According to the report, the number of golfers nationwide increased in 1988 from 21.7 million to 23.4 million — a 7.8 percent rise. This is the third straight year that the number of golfers increased by more than 7 percent.

Also, the national golf participation rate (i.e. the percentage of the U.S. population which plays golf) climbed from 9.7 to 10.4 percent. This is the first time this rate has ever exceeded 10 percent.

Nowhere is golf fever more apparent than in Wisconsin and Minnesota, which lead the nation in participation. Nearly 16 percent of the residents of both these states play golf. Next are Utah, Iowa, Michigan and North Dakota, where more than 14 percent of the population are golfers.

Michigan also is one of seven states to boast more than a million golfers. California is the leader with 2.4 million, followed by New York, 1.7 million; Texas, 1.6 million; Illinois, 1.5 million; Ohio, 1.4 million; Michigan, 1.3 million; and Florida, 1.2 million.

Dr. Gordon Benson, the Foundation's Vice President of Research, says the NGF will be watching this growth in the popularity of golf very closely.

"A recent study report by McKinsey & Co. and the NGF projects that the number of golfers could reach 30 million by the year 2000," he says, "and this is based on a modest 2 percent increase each year between now and the turn of the century.

"However, he adds, "if we should average 5 percent per year, we could see 40 million golfers by the year 2000."

To accommodate such an increase in the total number of golfers, NGF researchers project that 400 additional courses a year will be needed between now and the year 2000. This is approximately one a day by the turn of the century. Currently, the national average is only about 125 new courses a year.

In addition to the rise in the numbers of golfers nationwide, total rounds played increased as well, from 434 to 487 million rounds.

Fueling this growth in rounds played, Dr. Benson says, is the extraordinary increase in the number of frequent golfers ... those who play 25 rounds or more a year.

"The number of frequent golfers grew from 4.8 million to 5.6 million ... a 16 percent rise," he notes. "This is a sharp departure from the previous year, when frequent golfers showed no increase in numbers.

"The importance of these frequent golfers is underscored by the fact that although they represent only 24 percent of the golfing population, they play 75 percent of the total rounds."

Nearly half of these frequent golfers are over the age of 50. Although they represent only 25 percent of the total golfing population, golfers over 50 average 43 rounds of golf a year ... three times that of younger golfers.

The report also shows that half of all golfers are in their 20s and 30s. Despite their great numbers, they play only 29 percent of the rounds.

ATTENTION ALL GOLFERS:

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Monday, October 2, 1989

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Host Superintendent: Ray Schmitz
11:30 a.m. Shotgun Start

- ☒ A half Golf Cart
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- ☒ Refreshments
- ☒ Dinner at Ravisloe C.C. (Approximately 6:00 p.m. — Jacket Required)
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