

My Top 10 Maintenance Pitfalls

by Dave Blomquist

The Sept./Oct. USGA Green Section Record's cover story was "The Ten Pitfalls of Golf Course Maintenance". Well, I have my own list of "pitfalls". The Green Section defined pitfall as "a hidden or not easily recognized danger or difficulty." My definition is slightly different: **Pitfall:** something that makes my life harder than it should be or just anything pertaining to this business that just tees me off (no pun intended).

MY TOP 10 PITFALLS OF GOLF COURSE MAINTENANCE:

10. Driving Ranges — No matter how good it is, golfers will complain about not having perfect fairway lies so they may practice their "approach" shots. In reality, we know the practice tee should be 2½" bluegrass, so the average golfer can re-create what they face on the course.

9. Environmental Protection Agency — They are around to insure that we are responsible for making sure our earth is here for future generations, but must they make us do all that paperwork? And what about all these chemical bans? I'm sure there has been sufficient evidence for some but come on, guys, don't bow to pressure from those uninformed albeit well meaning "citizen groups." Use common sense and review the scientific data not emotional hog wash.

8. Long Range Planning Committees — They tend to overthink, under-fund and generally screw things up.

7. Vacations — Every year I promise myself to restrict vacations to winter for all full timers. NOT! I always wimp out and let my mechanic take off in mid-July, but the best one is when the college kids that only work the summer ask for two weeks vacation, "C'mon, man, I've been working since June."

6. Vandals — Just once I'd like to catch one of these punks. At times I've considered the following: electrifying the fence, rabid pit bulls, a bottle of tequila, a shotgun and the promise of 5 hours overtime pay to the Mexican laborer with the highest body count.

5. Leaves — Just when you think you've survived the summer, BOOM! Here comes the leaves. This is also the time when the Tree Committee decides to plant more! Great timing.

4. Answering Machines — I remember when I woke up late I had to speak directly to the boss and plead my case. Playing hookey is easy today. All they do is call early and leave a message, "I must have a 24 hour bug, I'll see you tomorrow." I'd be willing to bet that employee absenteeism rose at the same rate as answering machine sales.

3. Ladies' Day — The United State Open happens at Naperville Country Club every Tuesday, or so it seems. There is no such thing as a casual round of golf. Every Tuesday is the most important event on the golf calendar. Don't these ladies know that tennis is healthier?

2. Power Carts — I know they are responsible for bringing more players to our game, but we'd be better off without them. They can cause slow play and the damage they create isn't worth the money they bring in.

1. Golfers — Granted without them we would all be doing something else, but do they have to wear those ridiculous spiked shoes or must they take those incredible beaver pelts from the

tees and fairways. Or why must they insist on playing when it's raining or when there's frost? And what about those ball marks? Don't they understand that someone has to repair them, and if they don't do it, the greens will suffer? Don't these people have jobs?

With all due respect to the Green Section and David Letterman, these are my Top 10 Golf Course Maintenance Pitfalls. Yours may be somewhat different, but soon the snow will be flying and it won't matter ... until next year.

Results of the MAGCS Championship Played at Big Foot C.C. on Sept. 21



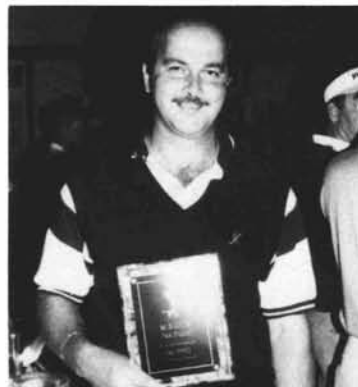
Randy Wahler, the 1992 MAGCS Champion

Championship Flight

1. Randy Wahler — 77
2. Al Pondel — 81
3. Tim Davis — 82
4. Ron Dohman — 83
5. Tom Robinson — 83
6. Tom Oberding — 86
7. Ed Fisher — 85

First Flight

1. Jim Knulty — 79
2. Keith Fuchs — 84
3. Rick Wilson — 85
4. Curt Adams — 85
5. Kerry Blatteau — 85
6. Mark Bobb — 85
7. Phil Zeinert — 87



Steve Van Acker, 2nd Flight Champion

Second Flight

1. Steve VanAcker — 99
2. John Stephenson — 93
3. John Malloy — 94
4. Don Hoffman — 95
5. Gary Hearn — 97
6. Craig Joscelyn — 97
7. Tom Pritchard — 97