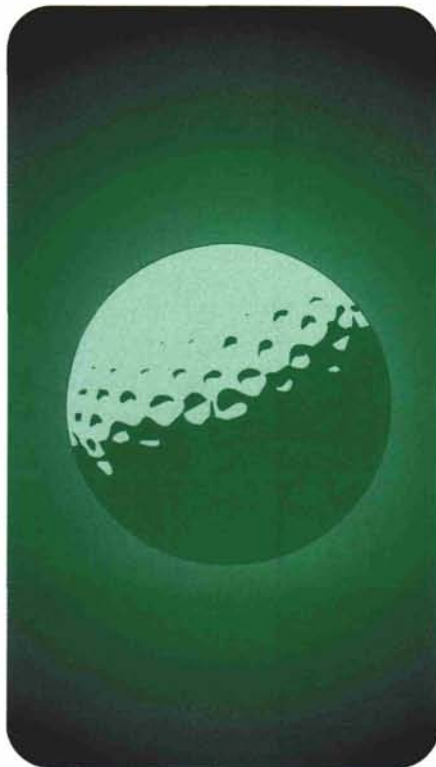


BOO! Nite Lite

by Gary Hearn, Salt Creek Golf Club

Welcome to the Dark Dimension. If you blink once, it might go away; if you blink twice, you might go away. Hey, doesn't this bring back memories of night watering — what is lurking in the shadow, "The Shadow" knows.

This isn't new to some superintendents, but to others, what the heck am I talking about? Here at Salt Creek Golf Club, Nite Lites weren't very spectacular either for the last 7 years. We could get about 2 outings per year with about 40 golfers per outing, but this year we encouraged corporation outings and had 11 outings that ranged from 40 to 125 golfers. With all these outings, I had to learn how to manage irrigation schedules,



course preparation, lighting the course, clean-up, and preparation for following morning golfers.

First, a brief description of the course. Salt Creek is a public course with two 9-holes that are mostly par 3s and short par 4s. The Blue course surrounds the White course, and most of the outings take place on the White course, which has small water hazards, a lot of open space, fairly flat terrain, and no outside lighting distractions.

Second, course preparation for Nite Lite. This year I learned very quickly how to prepare for this event. Remember, this is an outing — there will be drinking. A two-man crew sets out about 6 p.m. to avoid golfers, and starts

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BOO! Nite Lite

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by removing all sand trap rakes (can't see those — it's a desert), removing signage (can't read in the dark), taking down stakes, removing ropes, putting up marking cones in areas that are wet and newly seeded and recently built (like stone walls), and putting up snow fences around ponds (those glow-in-the-dark golf balls are expensive). All tee markers are moved up to forward tees, and all par 4s are moved into the fairways about 250 yards from the green.

Third, lighting the course and preparing for darkness. The pro shop personnel put out glo-sticks for the flagsticks and tee markers. The driving range lights are turned off. The beer cart has glo-sticks taped all over the vehicle, and the driver carries a flashlight to make change.

Fourth, irrigation scheduling. Usually, the White course is being used; thus, the White course gets watered the night before. The greens might get watered that night after Nite Lite, depending upon time. Some outings don't finish until 1:00 in the morning. Sometimes there are back-to-back outings — Friday night and Saturday night. One thing I forgot to add, this course is dependent upon a night waterman with quick couplers, so watering is "joy-joy". Hopefully, in the fall of 1996, an automatic irrigation system will be installed to alleviate watering around Nite Lite outings.

Fifth, course preparation and clean-up the following morning. The course must be ready for weekend golfers who are paying a higher green fee. Starting early in the morning around 5 a.m., two crew members set out to put sand trap

rakes back in the traps, put stakes, ropes, and signage up, remove marking cones and snow fence, remove glo-sticks, pick up garbage, and repair any damage that was caused from Nite Lite golfers — like tree damage, sand trap edges, restaking trees, and bushes. Lost tee markers, flags, and flagsticks are replaced, and tee markers are set back to normal position.

In summary, a few tricks that I picked up to aid in course preparation for the following morning: Keep all stakes and ropes in the area where they belong; just pull the stakes out along with the rope and lay them flat on the ground. Mark the stake/post hole with white paint for the original spot. Use posts with ground inserts. The holes never change; and when the ground is hard, the stakes go in easily. For each water hazard, use the same snow fence that is marked for that hazard. ■

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