

on 10/2020

THE MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS

COURSE

FEEL THE BURN

MIDWEST WINTER MEETINGS

GOLF'S LITTLE GIVEBACK



Stephen Hope

Crystal Tree Golf & Country Club

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front cover

The 18th hole at the Robert Trent Jones, Jr. designed course in Orland Park is the most difficult hole on the back side. It plays 421 yards from the tips, with bunkering and water all down the right side to an elevated green.

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FEATURE
Feel the Burn
 John Maksymiu



Fall can be a great time to use controlled burns to manage naturalized areas, especially if you're planning to follow up in spring with herbicide. Read about the process and best methods to make sure you get the most out of your efforts.

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DATES

2020 UPCOMING MIDWEST EVENTS

Midwest October Meeting, October 19, Crystal Tree Golf & CC
 We're working on a monthly schedule for education and Midwest Meetings throughout the winter months.

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The news of the in person Golf Industry Show being cancelled was not really a surprise by the time the decision was made by all those who plan and manage the show. From attendees to purveyors, we have not heard one person say it was the wrong choice to cancel.

Simply, there are too many unknowns to hope that people will travel to Las Vegas in January/February and attend. Since then GCSAA has announced the show will be online and from the ability of software package they've subscribed to do this; it may change parts of the GIS forever.

Like the GCSAA, the Midwest leaders have been working through different scenarios for our annual winter events, like the Annual Meeting and Turf Clinic, the January Meeting and Fundraiser for the Wee One Foundation, the Hospitality Reception at the GIS, Assistant Workshops and Technician Trainings. At present, the board has decided to hold our Annual Meeting online and adapt the Turf Clinic to bi-weekly online education. Rather than try and accomplish it all in one seating, (who wants to sit in front of their computer for a full day?), we're going to host hourly talks every other week online. We hope to offer something for everyone throughout the winter, focusing on different membership classes and topics to help you do things better.

Our educational monthly meetings are easy enough to put together and once we're able to do so, we will. That's the rationale that the Midwest Board is using for events after the first of the year. If we need to continue to meet online, we will. If we can safely get together for face-to-face meetings, we'll do that instead. The group would like to hold some type of Hospitality event or maybe several smaller events throughout our region. The auction to support the Wee One Foundation may be pushed back to our first golf event of the season. The Board wants to continue to support the Wee One and all it does for our industry. We have not closed the planning book for the coming year, we're just writing our own chapter in it as circumstance allows.

We're hopeful that by the time Spring comes around, we're able to hold meetings as we've historically done or at least in similar fashion to our meeting at Naperville Country Club and our upcoming meeting at Crystal Tree Golf and Country Club. Whatever the case, the Midwest will continue to revolve around its members and adapt to their needs. ©

The board has decided to hold our Annual Meeting online and adapt the Turf Clinic to bi-weekly online education.



The Midwest Turf Clinic at Medinah Country Club is always a well-attended planned event and provides high quality education as our membership celebrates another completed golf season.

Feel the Burn

John Maksymiu, BTSI

PHOTO CREDITS: MATT KREGEL



BURNING NATURALIZED AREAS FOR SPRING SPRAY

When the golf season is complete and the course is nearly put away for winter it can be an exciting time for land managers that apply prescribed burning to naturalized and grass areas. It is one of the enjoyable parts of our jobs when we can be a kid again. There comes an adrenaline rush with the responsibility and power of fire. As exciting as this time can be, and short lived, are we really feeling the burn? Or feeling "OUT" the burn?

Prescribed burning can be an easy land management practice and a quick method to see to large native expanses. As an advocate to promoting ecological programming, and a long career in the golf industry, I have learned that the existence and management of native areas does not completely reduce a workload or in many ways, inputs. Instead, it directs even more responsibility and time on the one or two technical individuals that are looking to shake the workload weight in the first place! While a prescribed burn will reduce fuel load, but the burn, and burning too frequently can also scarify/stratify unwanted weed seeds and could promote early growth of difficult to control weeds. The action benefits the weed in early competition against desirable plants making your weed situation worse.

One approach to assist in achieving desired native or grass areas, without delving into all the facets and BMP's of land management, is applying pre-emergent herbicides in conjunction with the benefits of fire. Pre-emergents are a great tool. In Spring, many turf grass operations have not kicked in full gear yet, and one may find time to tackle items off their laundry list, such as native or out of play grass areas. These areas

are difficult to maintain in season, require time, consume resources, and laborious work when growing. For managers with little time and few resources, a prescribed burn and pre-emergent control can be a simple answer to check the native management task off the list, reducing in season attention. Making a detailed schedule of your expectations for these areas goes without saying, and there are many ways to manage our unique sites. Although, success in achieving this goal and combining these two strategies together may be as simple as timing and patience. Balancing the fine line with naturalized areas are equally as important as the timelines we follow so diligently for turf.

Pre-emergent herbicides are designed to bond or adsorb to organic carbon (C-H bonds) relatively tightly to be effective.

Organic carbons are found in plant residue, soil, wood, and more. Thus, pre-emergents "walk a fine line" of being available for plant uptake, a necessity to kill a newly germinated seed that intercepts the preemergent layer or herbicide, or even becoming completely unavailable. The efficacy of a pre-emergent is highly determined on how much organic carbon is in the target area. An application of a pre-emergent in a mowed naturalized area with the residue left in place has a high potential of being locked up in organic residue. A timely irrigation event may potentially move the herbicide to the soil,

the intended target. However, if no irrigation or rainfall occurs more of the product will be broken down by U.V. light or adsorbed by thatch, and less easily moved to the target soil. A prescribed burn may remove all the dead material or thatch that could otherwise intercept a pre-emergent herbicide. Adversely, burning may also produce more ash and char, carbon (C-H) sites that could bind the preemergence herbicide more



Effective fires burn best between 50-70% relative humidity. Too dry and they burn too fast, too wet and they won't spread. Ideal temperatures for controlled burns are between 40-60 degrees F. Wind speed and direction should be favorable as well. Steady wind speeds between 3-7 MPH are ideal. Direction of the wind should be watched as well depending on the surrounds (roadways, neighbors, etc.)

tightly, lowering efficacy. The goal of a prescribed burn when coupled with a follow up preemergent herbicide application is to get the active ingredient to the soil. The best method while



Head burning uses the wind to move the fire by starting the fire on the upwind side of the area. This method creates a fire that burns hotter, moves rapidly and can be more difficult to control and are less effective at removing material.

burning is to do a slow Back Burn. This will cause more of the organic material to leave the target area as smoke and or ash (as CO₂ and as organic carbon particulates [smoke]). Avoid fast, Head-Burns that may not burn or ride the area of the organic fuel load completely. This will potentially leave more ash and char in the target area (C-H) to bind a pre-emergent before it can reach the soil.

The program is a complex scenario where "one size does not fit all". Consider several options. Do not feel obligated to burn all sites annually. Create a burn schedule in detail based on expectations, necessity, and severity of your sites. If feasible, try a Fall prescribed burn and an early application of a pre-emergent in Spring. During a Spring burn, time your burn date prior to a rain event (easier said than done!). I recommend Back-Burning a Spring burn for natives. Thus, burning the fuel load and site hot and thorough. If you are burning fine fescues, only burn a fast Head-Burn. Again, attempt to time the burn prior to a rain event. Apply your

pre-emergent several days to a week after rain. The rain will help dilute and clear your burn site area of any residual carbon, increasing efficacy of your pre-emergent. As we know, burning will also warm up soil temps and activate a growth response. A follow up rain event will also escalate growth activation. The window between post burn and pre-emergent is the most crucial time when combining the two. As a superintendent pick and choose where to apply pre-emergents. Understand that efficacy may be lost, or you have no need in certain areas.



Back burning is the term given to the process of lighting vegetation in such a way that it has to burn against the prevailing wind. This produces a slower moving and more controllable fire.

Always consult with your local authorities to see if a permit is needed; most communities now require one or at least notification when burning is carried out. ©



It's better to burn fine fescues using a the Head-Burn method; a quicker moving fire will have less potential for harming the crown of the plant and help to remove unwanted leaf litter to make a herbicide spray more effective.

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OCT 20

SOME DATES TO REMEMBER

October 19 – MAGCS monthly meeting and Ryder Cup format golf event at Crystal Tree Golf & Country Club in Orland Park, IL, Stephen Hope host superintendent.

Welcome to fall! And let's also welcome our newest MAGCS members, who are:

Jaymeson Wilcox, Class C, Crystal Tree Golf and Country Club

Jon Burchett, Class DE, Whisper Creek Golf Course

Best Wishes and good fortune to **Virgil Range**, former assistant superintendent at Aurora Country Club on his landing the golf course superintendent's position at Kishwaukee Country Club in DeKalb, IL. Virg and Rocket, his goose-chasing dynamo start their tenure at "Kish" on October 5th. Best of luck to you, Virgil, and thank you for 10 great years!



The last MAGCS golf event of 2020 is just around the corner, and it's the always-fun Ryder Cup format, with partners playing six holes of scramble, six best ball and six alternate shot. Our host club is Crystal Tree Golf & Country Club in Orland Park, with **Stephen Hope**, Assistant Jaymeson Wilcox, and crew providing the golf course conditioning. Hope to see you there!

MAGCS OCTOBER MEETING

DATE: October 19

Crystal Tree Golf and Country Club

Stephen Hope, Host

Two-Man Championship



MIDWEST
ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS

Congratulations to LONGTIME member and past president **Peter Leuzinger** on his recent feat of athletic prowess. On September 1st, Peter shot his age AND par while playing his favorite course near his retirement home in Arizona—a smooth 72! Nice to know we can get better at something as we get older. To be clear, by "retirement home," I wasn't meaning "Retirement Home" like Silver Sands or Foggy Acres; I meant his home. Where he lives. While being retired. Anyway, just wanted to clear that up. Cheers Pete!



The news regarding golf remains very positive, according to Golf Datatech, LLC, which reported that U.S. retail golf equipment sales for August 2020 were up nearly 32% over last August, and exceeded the previous all-time high for the month, set in 2006, by 15%.

In less than a year from now, the world of Long Ballers will descend on the Chicagoland area, as Ultimate Long Drive, Inc. has secured September 11 through 19 at Cog Hill Golf & Country Club for its 2021 Amateur Long Drive and Xtreme Long Drive competitions. Should be a fun week for **Chris Flick** and his staff, with Titleists falling from the sky like hailstones the size of, well, golf balls.

OK, why not? What do you get if you divide the circumference of a pumpkin by its diameter?

Pumpkin π . 'Tis the season.

If you are a customer of Martin Implement, take note that it has joined Alta Equipment Group, and will be serving you as Alta Equipment going forward. Their new ad is on page 17.

Another equipment company on the move is Textron Specialized Vehicles, which is relocating all manufacturing of Jacobsen professional turf equipment to its facility in Ipswich, U.K. The Ipswich plant, which currently builds Jacobsen and Ransomes mowers, has been in operation for more than 187 years.

The Sunshine Course at the Midwest Golf House is getting a face lift; Wadsworth Golf Construction did the heavy lifting guided by Doug Myslinksi with \$75,000 donated by the Wadsworth Golf Charities Foundation. Newer grasses have been seeded to replace the now 16 year old varieties as well as the installation of test bunkers featuring popular liners used today.



The Sunshine Course has been seeded and will be ready for research in 2021. It was a great August/September to complete this project.

Q: What mammoth trees line the fairways at **Sandra Bemis** and **Chris Balogh's** course?

A: Giant Renwoods.

GCSAA has announced group pricing discounts for its Virtual 2021 Golf Industry Show in February. The All-Access

Facility Package, available to everyone on the maintenance team, includes 78 education sessions which can be viewed the week of the event as well as on-demand with 30 days of extended access. The package also includes the virtual trade show, networking events, virtual visits from special guests, and more for \$850 (\$1,050 for non-GCSAA members) for an unlimited number of staff members. Each registered member will receive 3.0 CEU's. Individual All-Access Packages are also available for \$600 (\$750 non-member).

GCSAA has also announced that it will sponsor the first-ever African American Golf EXPO and Forum to be held in Atlanta, GA on February 20-23 as a Tournament Sponsor. The event will take place at the Marietta Hotel and Conference Center and will bring together community leaders, golf enthusiasts and professionals working within the golf community to promote economic inclusion and diversity in the \$84 billion industry.

The United States Golf Association will build a second headquarters in Pinehurst, N.C., and why wouldn't they? It's no secret that Pinehurst and the USGA have a special relationship—in the last 30 years, Pinehurst and its famed No. 2 course have played host to more championship events than any other site in the nation.

AND they'll build this new headquarters—dubbed Golf House Pinehurst—without CEO Mike Davis, who will be leaving the organization by the end of 2021 to team with golf course designer Tom Fazio II in a new business venture named Fazio & Davis Golf Design.

Golf witticism of the month (from Sam Snead): If a man comes home with sand in his cuffs and cockleburs in his pants, don't ask him what he shot.

John Jensen is a Reinders guy, which sells stuff to golf courses. **Jerry Kelly** is a PGA Tour and Champions Tour guy who plays on golf courses. A coincidence?

MIDWEST Doppelgänger

Jensen and Kelly - one in the same.

October's "Clavin-ism:" Did you know—it's a little-known fact—that the most famous left-handed golfer in history has a dirty secret? He DOES. Phil Mickelson, or "Lefty" as he's known, was born a righty! He simply mirrored his father's left-handed swing as a child, and never looked back.

You know how it's basically the death penalty if you give your GCSAA credentials to someone else to use to get into the Masters? Apparently the folks at Augusta National frown on people scamming them out of actual tickets, too. A Georgia man who brought his family into a scheme to make money—an estimated \$530,000 over the course of five years—by defrauding the Augusta National Golf Club out of Masters tickets was recently sentenced to 28 months in prison and a \$157,494 fine. His parents, who were in on the scheme, paid \$59,000 each in fines as well. All the fines collected have gone to local charity and the First Tee, which is nice.

Golfdom magazine was very kind to MAGCS last month, featuring two of our members in articles. **Jeff Vercautren** of Rich Harvest Farms penned an article titled "Living on the Edge" about his attention to detail on the course, particularly with edging EVERYTHING from cart paths, sprinkler heads, and bunkers to keeping cutting edges sharp on mowing equipment. In Golfdom Insider, **Sam MacKenzie**, CGCS MG and Olympia Fields Country Club were featured in "Olympia Fields CC and the BMW Championship: Not its first rodeo." The story told of the many championships the club has held, including three PGA Tour events in the last five years. It also highlighted Sam's take on the effects of COVID on his preparation and execution of the BMW in late August. Good stuff from both of these MAGCS members.

Also getting famous in print was **Dave Blomquist** of Chicagoland Turf. As a former superintendent and current distributor rep, Dave had some heady observations on Early Order Programs (EOPs) in September's GCM magazine in its "Guide to EOP."

Another September has passed, and with it another outstanding Wee One Fundraiser at Pine Hills in Sheboygan, WI—the 17th year we have been fortunate enough to be invited to play such a great golf course. And NO hole in one on #9 this year! It just doesn't seem right, does it? Many thanks to superintendent **Rod Johnson**, CGCS and the awesome staff at Pine Hills who bend over backward to provide participants with a great day of hospitality, great golf, friendship, and brats and tacos! @



The day looked a little different as there was no congregating before golf, attendees warmed up and made their way to their carts and enjoyed the day on the links.

Fist bumps and social distancing were new features of the day at Pine Hills.



Dan Tully sharing his thoughts with Architect Drew Rogers on some of the changes he's working on at Pine Hills.

Tacos. The food never disappoints.



GCSAA President John Fulling gave Tom Prichard his watch after Prichard told him the GCSAA watch he's worn every day for the past umpteen years broke!

More fist bumps. Nick Marfise and Dustin Hugen greet.



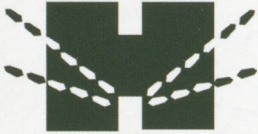
More food. John Nelson approves.

Mumps made it. It was a long walk but he survived to get hydration.



I think it's wet. Chad Ball is not too happy with his tee shot on the 8th hole.





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SUPER-N-site

Stephen Hope

Crystal Tree Golf and Country Club

Luke Cella, MAGCS

PHOTO CREDITS:LUKE CELLA

When I met with Stephen we took a tour of the course and it was readily apparent that he enjoys golf and takes pleasure in presenting the course; he changed a couple of tee blocks sharing the way he likes to play the hole and how it sets up for different golfers. It's great to see someone excited about the game and his chosen profession.

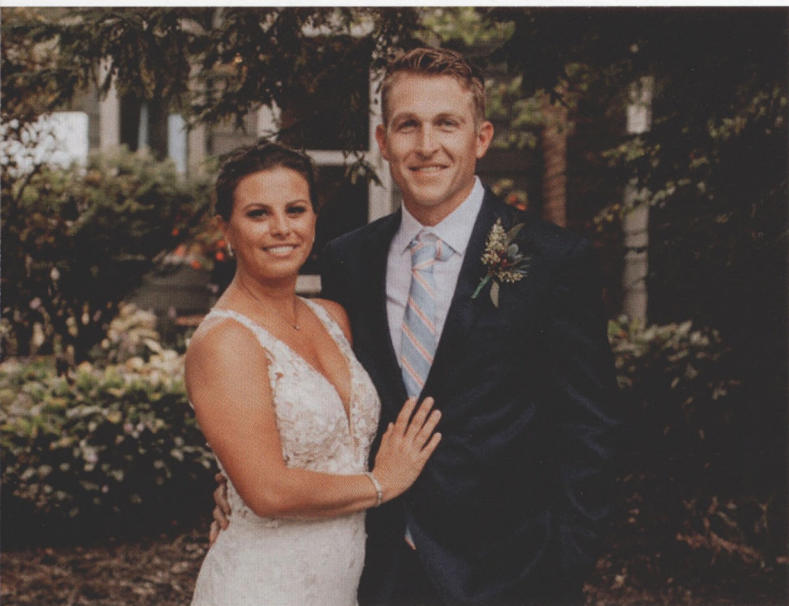
Stephen is from Henderson Kentucky, a city on the Ohio River, the same hometown of John James Audubon, the famed naturalist and ornithologist. The first course Stephen worked at was Crosswinds Golf Course in Bowling Green, Kentucky and as he described it, "one of the flattest courses you'll find." It was built by a paving company. Stephen went to college in Bowling Green at Western Kentucky, studied

Horticulture and specialized in Turfgrass Management. He's a Hill Topper with a passion for golf.

He came to this area working a dual internship at both Wynstone and Merit Club learning the different styles and programs between Curtis James and John Nelson, respectively. He followed Curtis to Old Elm for a stint then made his way to Ivanhoe working for Tom Prichard. Thereafter, Stephen found his way to Canyata Golf Club in Marshall Illinois as the Golf Course Superintendent where he oversaw many different projects including a bunker redo on this Golf Digest's top 100 course. He then returned to the north, working at Merit Club for a summer before becoming the Golf Course Superintendent at Crystal Tree Golf and Country Club three years ago.

His energy and passion for the business is great to see as he scans the grounds. The playing areas of the course are really dialed in, the *Poa/bent* greens look smooth and true. Like many other courses this summer, his members have been playing golf non-stop. The club had to institute a guest policy that reduced the hours for guest play to accommodate their members. Stephen attributes the conditioning of the course to his staff, some have been there for 30 years and his assistant Jaymeson Wilcox, a new MAGCS member that made his way into golf from sports turf management after retiring from the Army.

The golf course was designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr, and Doug Myslinski updated the bunkering, an ongoing



Stephen and Molly Hope began their married life a couple of weeks ago.



project as budgeting and time allows to complete in house. The majority of the green bunkers are finished with Best sand, while there are still some fairway bunkers to complete, a process that Stephen has great experience from his days at Wynstone when they underwent a similar project. He redid all the bunkers at Canyata using the capillary concrete liner, and now he's using a blankets under the sand at Crystal Tree.

The terrain that encompasses the golf course is quite undulating for a golf course surrounded by homesites in the region. Players need to be cognizant of their ball position, even in the middle of the fairway where a flat lie is seldom found. Par is protected by numerous bunkers and undulating greens. The hazards present themselves from many of the teeing areas, compressing the landing areas in the player's mind, even though there is ample room to play a shot safely.

Stephen has a great eye to tie in the periphery of the playing grounds. He's been cleaning out the understory/overgrown/unmanaged areas that are in the line of sight of play. It's a process that takes time but makes a great impact being able to see through to other features of the golf course. The trees left still provide a backdrop and offer an amount of depth perception, but by opening up the viewing lane, there

(continued on next page...)



Rolling the faces of the bunkers helps shots to roll down into the flat areas of the hazards and keeps golfers happy with flat lies and less plugged shots.

An ongoing project is cleaning out the understories of tree groupings and planting turf as pictured here on the left side of the fairway and behind the green on 18.





is a feeling of greater space and openness to the property. Stephen has plenty of projects lined up to improve the property as time, budget, and staffing allow.

There are many homes that line the property as part of the Crystal Tree development. Stephen spends a fair amount of his time talking with homeowners when changes are made on the golf course property adjacent to land owners. While we were talking about a few homeowners in particular, I thought this is part of the job that every superintendent that manages a course in a housing development deals with regularly. It should be part of the job description, it requires some skill and patience that are necessary to keep neighbors neighborly.

Stephen has a great attitude and is always open to new ideas and not afraid to share them. He told me it's one of the reasons he's on Twitter. He saw what others are doing to smooth the bunker faces (modified paint rollers) while hand raking the bottom - a practice he modified a little to make it work at Crystal Tree. His cart is outfitted with some multipurpose clamps that safely hold his moisture meter in the irrigating months, another idea he found on the Twittersphere.

Stephen was tasked earlier this year to make an impact

that all the members would see with a limited amount of funds. He wisely spent the funds on the entrance to the club, cleaning out many years of overgrowth, installing new sod, signs and new plant material. Each member and guest that heads into the club is welcomed by a trimmed and kept entrance that is indicative of the rest of the property that Stephen manages. Stephen, Jaymeson, and staff are excited to host the MAGCS Two-Man Championship this October and welcome us to Crystal Tree. @

The arrival to any property is important for first impressions. Stephen and staff gave a face lift to the street entrance (inset) that all must go through before driving up past the practice facility to the clubhouse.



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Golf's Little Giveback

Luke Cella, CGCS



I know we'll be looking back on the COVID impact on golf for many years to come. For those on the maintenance side, it's been a wild ride from fighting the State to maintain our properties, walking twosomes, to booked tee sheets and record numbers of rounds. From a player's perspective, golf has been quite a respite.

When people hear what I do, I'm always asked, "Do you play a lot of golf?"

My standard answer is, "Do you want my answer or what my wife thinks?" They are two different viewpoints completely. I like to play the game when I'm playing well. I try not to take it for granted when I'm not; that's hard to do.

A few times this year, while playing with friends not in our industry, we've been paired up at a couple of different courses in our area. That says a lot, right there. The first time we were paired with a father and son who by no means played golf often. The second time was a husband and wife who played nine holes every once in a while, we just happened to catch them on their first 18 hole round this year. When I went out the last time, we had a threesome and found a single waiting to see if he could find a group to join. He played in a weekly league and wanted to get a round in before the league's upcoming championship matches. It reminded me of my childhood, riding to one of the Chicago Forest Preserve Courses on my bike with clubs on my back, getting paired up with whoever would be there. While it's nice to just play with those you know, it's been an opportunity for me to see how people interact with the game and the course. I've observed:

Players that are good enough to regularly make ball marks attempt to fix them. I say attempt because they really don't know how to do so. Those who don't regularly make ball marks, don't know they make them, and it's ludicrous for us to expect them to fix them (unless it is right in their sight line of a forthcoming putt, which if it is, will only get tamped down with the putter head).

Divots taken during practice swings don't get replaced; if any are replaced at all, it's only the one that was made when they hit the ball.

Golfers line themselves up off a tee with the tee blocks, no mat-

ter where they are pointed.

Golfers always think they hit the ball farther than they actually do.

No one likes to tell other golfers in their group when their ball is out of play.

Healthy, tall roughs really slow down the pace of play.

Most people don't putt out, unless it means something. Poorly placed holes can ruin a round, especially if the greens are quick and run out.

If golf etiquette was never taught, it may never be learned.

After walking many of these rounds this year, I've really come to the realization that golf carts have disconnected people from the game and the course. Their focus is getting to their ball, not the cart path nor the sign that tells them to stay on the path. Add their phone to the mix and they could be playing golf on the moon, not the turf you manage.

Golfers do appreciate many things though most don't know someone is responsible for it:

- Smooth greens that hold their line.
- Fair cupping locations.
- Level teeing areas with a healthy stand of turf (especially on holes where irons are used from the tee).
- Maintained tree lines that are not overgrown and impact intended ball flight around teeing areas.
- Turf that is evenly irrigated with minimal wet spots.
- Well maintained fairways.
- Fair rough.
- Smooth cart paths.
- Clean and functioning rest rooms.
- Adequate garbage receptacles.
- Practice areas and putting greens ... (this list is endless).

The single observation I've made of every golfer is the joy and escape the game provides no matter the mindset, skill level, or pandemic – thank you. @



Slow play is still an anathema for all.



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
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