

Rebuild... and save \$200,000

With five mechanics on staff, Boca Woods rebuilt 20 major pieces of equipment and saved a lot of money

BY LARRY KIEFFER



The shop team at Boca

Woods: mechanics

Jerry Napolitano, Robert

Jones, Dennis Kelley, Don

Lanning and John

Hindman

The directors of Boca Woods Country Club were incredulous.

They guessed that Superintendent John Gallagher and Greens Chairman Bernard Bernstein had a surprise in store when the pair asked the club's board to conclude its regular meeting with a little party at the newly refurbished maintenance complex.

And they were duly impressed with the brilliantly lit, white, sanitary setting. Remembering the dingy conditions of less than a year before when the members took over the 36-hole country club from the developer, the directors could see that Gallagher and his crew had been working very hard.

The improvement to the shop's appearance was particularly dramatic when it was filled with all those bright, shiny tractors, mowers and sweepers lined up with parade-ground precision.

After suffering through a lengthy ownership transition during which the developer spent as little as possible on golf course maintenance, the directors were pleased to see some obviously reliable machinery in tip-top condition. In those last months before the buyout was officially closed Nov. 1, 1988, it had been impossible to complete an 18-hole round without seeing at least one piece of maintenance equipment abandoned in the rough, awaiting a tow back to the shop... if something to tow it in could be started.

It would take several years, the directors knew, before all the worn-out machinery could be replaced, but at least they had made a start.

They assumed that they had been invited to inspect the first batch of new equipment, and that's why their eyes were not prepared to believe what their ears had just told them.

"Every piece of equipment you see in here," said Gallagher at the end of the party, "— well, every piece but one — is the same equipment that you bought when you took over from the developer. With one exception, these are all 1981- to 1984-model machines that we rebuilt right here in the shop.

"One is brand new. Can you pick it out?"

Nobody could.



John Gallagher and "the boss"

"That's when I knew we had really accomplished something," said Gallagher, savoring the moment several months later in his office.

What Gallagher's mechanics had done in about a year's time was completely rebuild 20 major pieces of maintenance equipment, saving the members more than \$210,000.



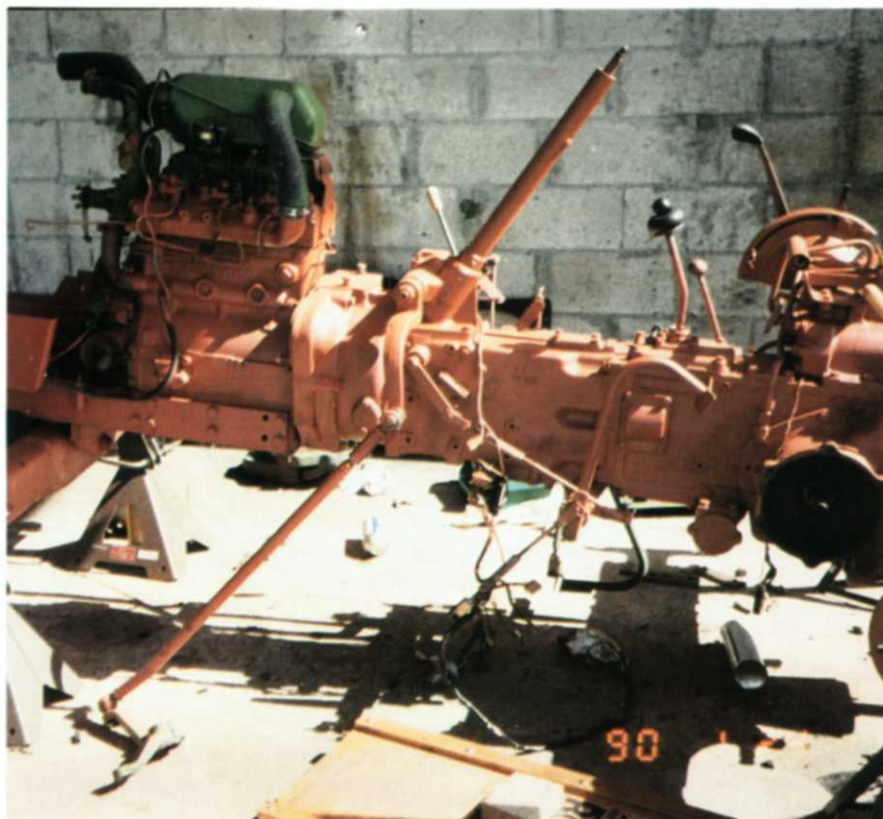
One of these tractors is brand new; the others have been rebuilt. Can you guess the new one? Answer next issue.

"That was all equipment that otherwise would have had to have been replaced," Gallagher said. "The replacement value today is \$290,765. We spent less than \$80,000 to make it exactly like new.

"Don is the key," he said, referring to Don Lanning, Boca Woods' chief mechanic and shop foreman, who had worked with Gallagher for three years at Coral Ridge CC in Fort Lauderdale.

Gallagher came to Boca Woods from Boca Del Mar after the members bought the facility. He immediately recruited Lanning.

Shortly after the pair began discussing Lanning's possible move to Boca Woods, Gallagher got a call from John Hindman, who had been chief



Every piece gets stripped to bare metal

Equipment	New	Rebuild
Toro Workmaster (1981)	\$6,600	\$1,800
Toro Workmaster (1981)	6,600	1,500
Toro Workmaster (1981)	6,600	1,800
Yamahauler (Reconditioned)	3,700	1,500
Yamahauler (1986)	3,700	1,000
Yamahauler (1985)	3,700	2,000
Sweeper	17,500	4,000
Lesco 7-gang rough mower (1985)	15,700	5,000
Lesco 7-gang fairway mower (1987)	16,100	5,000
Toro 7-gang rough mower (1985)	22,165	6,000
Toro sand trap rake (1984)	7,400	1,500
John Deere tractor (1981)	15,000	4,500
John Deere tractor (1981)	15,000	9,000
Massey Ferguson tractor (1987)	15,000	1,000
Ransomes 350D (1984)	38,000	6,000
Ransomes 350D (1984)	38,000	6,000
Toro 72-inch out-front sweeper (1981)	12,500	6,000
Toro 72-inch out-front mower (1981)	12,500	6,000
Toro sweeper	17,500	4,000
Toro sweeper	17,500	4,000
20 pieces of equipment rebuilt	\$290,765	\$77,600

mechanic under Gallagher at Boca Del Mar CC in Boca Raton. Hindman was working with a manufacturer and wanted to get back to a golf course.

"Lo-o-o-o-kee here!' I said to myself," recalls Gallagher. "I've got the chance to get two of the best mechanics in the business.' So the three of us sat down with a pot of coffee and worked it out. Don would be the chief mechanic and shop foreman; John would be the assistant. And we were all comfortable with that."

By rebuilding

his basic

equipment,

Gallagher can

think about

buying

specialty items

like a backhoe

or bucket truck

Three other mechanics — Jerry Napolitano, Dennis Kelley and Robert Jones — complete the Boca Woods shop team.

"A lot of superintendents have asked me how I can afford to have a shop foreman and four mechanics," Gallagher says. "At a 36-hole operation, how can you afford *not* to? Look at what we have done. And we can

keep it up indefinitely.

"We have one man who does nothing but preventive maintenance, so the equipment will last longer, and we can keep rebuilding it over and over again."

"As long as you do it *right*, you can do it indefinitely," interjects Lanning.

Doing it "right" involves stripping the machine to its framework, removing the old paint and starting with a fresh coat of primer. Every machine is completely re-wired and every part is cleaned and repainted or replaced. The engines are rebuilt or replaced.

"We use 100 percent original factory equipment," Lanning says. "We don't try to do any upgrading. In fact

that's one of two valid reasons for buying new equipment: when the technology changes to the point that "newer" really is "more efficient," it's time to get the new."

The other reason to buy new equipment, Lanning says, is to make up for the lack of mechanical skill.

"If you don't have the knowledge to do it right, don't even try it," he says.

Rebuilding is only half of the Boca Woods program.

"Once we get a piece of equipment in shape, we put it into a program of daily maintenance: washing it and hand-drying it daily, waxing it weekly or monthly, whatever is appropriate."



John Hindman wanted to get back to a golf course

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Operators keep their names shined

If the equipment is to be used almost exclusively by one operator, Gallagher has another trick. "After it's been rebuilt, we paint the

operator's name on it and put it on the floor with a can of wax and a towel."

Although the operator is expected to keep his equipment washed and waxed, he is not supposed to do any maintenance.

"The operator never touches a grease gun or a can of oil," says Gallagher. "That's the PM guy's responsibility."


Another Gallagher-Lanning technique is to assign each mechanic to one nine. First thing in the morning, each mechanic goes out to make sure all the equipment is running right on "his" course.

"They don't stay out there very long, but it saves time if they're right there

when adjustments have to be made to the reel mowers."

Gallagher's enthusiasm is not lost on his boss, Bernstein.

"We started with weed-infested, mole-cricket-damaged, unhealthy turf and no working equipment to maintain it. Many superintendents would have walked away from this challenge.

"What John and Don and their staff have accomplished is almost miraculous. Now, when you walk into this place, it's something we all can be proud of. And the members will reap the benefits for years because, not only will they have superior playing conditions, but our capital expenditures will be considerably less." 

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