



Got Wheels!

On Today's Golf Courses, There's a Set for Every Purpose

When I first set foot on a golf course as a construction laborer in 1959, the rolling stock consisted of two tractors and a pickup truck. The pickup truck was used to haul two walking mowers around and they were walked up and down a plank to load and unload them at each green.

Seems like they added a Jacobsen G-10 to pull a fairway gang mower when the course opened. The bunker-raking crew (all four of us) shouldered those big aluminum rakes and walked the nine-hole course.

Fifteen years later at Walt Disney World, we were riding three-wheeled Minute Misers, Red Ryders and Cushmans and Toro Sand Pros raked the bunkers. Since then utility vehicles have evolved into multi-use workhorses with heavy-duty chassis, or light-duty modified golf cars with an array of options. There are all-terrain-type vehicles and mini-trucks. Something to fit every need and every budget. Read on to see what some of your peers have to say about utility vehicles.

JOEL JACKSON, CGCS

THOUGHTS ON UTILITY VEHICLES

Sales Reps Can Help You Find the Vehicle to Fit Your Need

The very first time I rode on a golf course utility vehicle I was a passenger. It was a 3-wheeled Cushman Truckster and the driver was going like a bat-out-of-hell. I was sitting on the bed next to the driver who was occupying the only seat. I had my feet propped on the



Today's golf course utility vehicles come in all shapes and sizes and have a variety of uses. Photo by Steve Pearson.

deflector on the side, one hand on the back rest of the seat and the other hand holding on (for dear life) to the bed. We flew around a corner heading towards the tee of a par three.

There was a ball in the center of the path.

This guy, skillfully and obviously well practiced, slammed on the brakes, grabbed the ball and threw it at a fleeing coot hitting him in the head, killing him instantly!

There were two problems with his plan: The lady who hit the ball to the path was still on the tee only 20 yards away and the dead coot was floating on the lake that now contained her ball. The following day, at 15 years old in 1972, my second day as a golf course maintenance employee, I was no longer the crew member with the least seniority! I quickly came to the conclusion that these stout little vehicles offered a considerable potential for abuse.

The possibility for abusing the attributes of the utility vehicle is only one consideration that should be given when assessing your needs in this area. There are many and I will attempt to cover some of them in this article.

One thing I would like to point out before proceeding is that you already have the very best people available to help you with this. These are your equip-

ment sales people who represent distributors and manufacturers who have spent, and continue to spend, considerable amounts of time and money analyzing your equipment needs.

I would also like to say that, in my opinion, small pick-up trucks and all-terrain vehicles have no place on the golf course. They were not designed for the work we do, and talk about the possibility of abuse! It is pretty hard to sneak up to the corner store for lottery tickets in a golf course utility vehicle.

In my experience there are three common situations at a golf course when it comes to lightweight utility vehicles; (1) the correct number of properly utilized and maintained lightweight utility vehicles are present, (2) a crew member is heading out to repair a damaged cup riding a bunker rake, or (3) the superintendent is driving the only heavy-duty truckster on site and every other vehicle has tires rubbing against body moldings and no brakes.

How do you determine the right number for your course? The right number is 5!

Seriously, you will need to put a pencil to paper to determine the number of each type of vehicle that is right for your course. Looking at what the course has had historically is also helpful. Just as we have found it difficult to compare main-