

# Keepers of golf's best courses

*Editor's note: We thank Ron Whitten and Golf Digest for allowing us to use the magazine's biannual rating of golf courses in the United States in compiling the questionnaire below and on pages 28 and 29.*

Superintendents at the top-rated golf courses across the United States are under pressure to produce the most playable, disease-free, and aesthetically pleasing courses around.

Their courses are judged among

the best nationally, so members demand that their maintenance be the best.

In doing so, the superintendents are under a number of constraints. Yet, at the same time, many are afforded extras — in money, labor

and equipment — to keep tee to green in extraordinary shape.

To shed some light on how they do it, and so that other superintendents across the country can compare to their own operations, we surveyed the top 15-ranked courses in 1) the public course category as rated by Golf Digest last November, and 2) the top

private/resort courses as voted by the magazine's panel in November 1989.

Nine of each group responded. Others declined.

Crucial to comparing figures on the charts are the number of holes, rounds played and length of season.

The superintendents have also

## GOLF COURSE NEWS

### Maintenance survey of the top-ranked

Course Location Superintendent	Shinnecock Hills Southampton, N.Y. Peter Smith	Cypress Point Club Pebble Beach, Calif. Manuel Cardoza	Merion GC (East) Ardmore, Pa. Dick Bator	Pebble Beach Golf Links Pebble Beach, Calif. Brad Hines
Number of holes	18	18	36	18
Rounds played per year	12,000	15,000	25,000	57,000
Length of season	6	12	12	12
Annual operating budget	\$500,000	N/A	\$1.1 M	\$1,180,000
Annual capital budget	\$50,000-70,000	N/A	\$300,000	N/A
Superintendent's salary	\$50,000+	N/A	\$104,000	\$50,000
On-season staff: fulltime/parttime	14/8	12/12	24/8	26/7
Off-season staff: fulltime/parttime	8/0	0/0	12/0	0/0
Do you have a full-time arborist?	No	No	No	No
Do you have a full-time horticulturist?	No	No	Yes	No
Full-time irrigation specialist?	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
No. mechanic: on-season/off-season	2/1	1/0	2/2	1/0
Use computer?/For what functions?	No	No	Yes/labor,budget	Yes/labor,budget
How often do you aerate?	G&F 2/Yr.	G3 T1 F2/Yr.	2/Yr.	G 12/Yr.
How often do you verticut?	1/Wk. summer	N/A	2/Mth. in-season	8/Mth.
Cart paths? Carts allowed on paths only?	No/No	No/No	No/No	Yes/Yes
Height of cut: Greens	1/8	1/8	1/8	3/20
Height of cut: Tees	1/4	3/8	5/16	1/2
Height of cut: Fairways	9/16	5/8	3/8	1/2
Height of cut: Collars	1/4	5/8	5/16	1/2
Times mowed per week: Greens	7	6	7	7
Times mowed per week: Tees	3	2	4	3
Times mowed per week: Fairways	4	3	4	6
Times mowed per week: Roughs	3	1	1	5
Times mowed per week: Collars	3	2	4	3
Use Stimpmeter? What speed?	Yes/9	Yes/9.5	Yes/9.5-11	Yes/9.5
Type/age irrigation system	Electromechanical/22	Computer/20	Electromechanical/20	Electromechanical/11
Pesticide storage building	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes



told us how often they aerate and verticut, and how often and high they cut greens, tees, fairways, collars and roughs.

In the chart "G" stands for greens, "F" for fairways, "T" for tees, "R" for roughs and "C" for collars. For instance, Hal Hicks at Seminole GC reported that he aerates "G3TF2R1/Yr.," meaning he

aerates greens three times a year, tees and fairways twice a year and roughs once a year.

Following are *Golf Digest's* top 15 private and resort courses in order: Pine Valley (N.J.) GC; Augusta (Ga.) National GC; Shinnecock Hills GC in Southampton, N.Y.; Cypress Point Club in Pebble Beach, Ca-

lif.; Merion GC in Ardmore, Pa.; Pebble Beach Golf Links; Oakmont (Pa.) CC; Seminole GC in North Palm Beach, Fla.; Muirfield Village GC in Dublin, Ohio; Medinah (Ill.) CC; The Country Club in Brookline, Mass.; Pinehurst (N.C.) CC #2; Winged Foot GC in Mamaroneck, N.Y.; Quaker Ridge GC in Scarsdale,

N.Y.; and Los Angeles CC.

The top 15 public courses are: Bull Creek GC in Midland, Ga.; Cantigny Links GC in Wheaton, Ill.; The Captain's GC in Brewster, Mass.; Cochita Lake (N.M.) GC; Cog Hill #4 in Lemont, Ill.; Eastmoreland GC in Portland, Ore.; Edgewood Lake Tahoe GC in Stateline, Nev.; Forest Preserve

National GC in Oak Forest, Ill.; Hog Neck GC in Easton, Md.; Hominy Hill GC in Colts Neck, N.J.; Hyland Hills GC in Westminster, Colo.; Indian Canyon Municipal GC in Spokane, Wash.; Jackson Hole (Wy.) G&TC; Kemper Lakes GC in Long Grove, Ill.; and Otter Creek in Columbus, Ohio.

**See public course survey  
on pages 28-29**

# private golf courses in the country

Oakmont CC Oakmont, Pa. Mark Kuhns	Seminole GC N. Palm Beach, Fla. Harold Hicks	Muirfield Village GC Dublin, Ohio Michael S. McBride	The Country Club Brookline, Mass. William Spence	Pinehurst #2 Pinehurst, N.C. Scott Lavis
36	18	18	27	18
60,000	10,000	18,000	30,000	35,000
9	8	8	7	12
\$750,000	\$700,000	N/A	\$680,000	\$500,000
\$150,000	\$150,000	N/A	\$75,000	\$60,000-70,000
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
28/4	14/0	16/25	18/0	17/3
8/0	14/0	16/0	8/2	12/0
Yes	No	No	No	No
Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3/2	1/0	2/2	1/1	2/2
Yes/labor,budget	No	Yes/water,labor,budget	Yes/water,labor,budget	Yes/budget
G 2/Yr.	G3 TF2 R1/Yr.	2/Yr.	2/Yr.	3/Yr.
G2 T3/Yr.	0	G 2/Week	15/Yr.	2/Month
No/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/Yes
3/32	1/8	1/8	1/8	5/32
1/4	3/8	1/4	1/2	1/2
7/16	3/8	3/8	1/2	1/2
1/4	3/8	1/4	1/2	1/2
2 daily	7	7	6	6
3	3	4	3	4
4	3	5	4	5
3	1	1	2	2
1	7	4	3	4
Yes/10.6-11	Yes/9	No	Yes/8.5-9.5	Yes/8.5
Computer/10	Computer/16	Comp.&Electromechanical/1	Computer/6	Electromechanical/8
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes