

Three strikes and you're out at Heather Hills CC

Electronic device lets golfer know when he leaves the cart path

By Mark Leslie

The Poholeks of Heather Hill Country Club had a problem and no solution.

Their problem: Maverick golfers were driving their carts onto the fairways, muddying them up, compacting the turf and generally raising havoc with playing conditions.

Their solution: None. That is, until the day Constant Poholek Jr., part-time lawyer and full-time son of the president and owner of Heather Hill, had a brainstorm.

With the ingenuity of Uncle Ernest Poholek, Constant Jr.'s idea is now a reality on Heather Hill's fleet of 41 gas-powered golf cars. And only the brave wander off the cart paths that span the 18-hole course, which will enlarge to 27 holes next year.

Each car is equipped with an electronic device that senses whether the car is on grass versus tar or gravel. As soon as the car veers off the path, an alarm sounds, warning the golfer to drive back onto the path.

If a golfer violates the restriction three times, the device shuts off the engine and the car goes nowhere. "The chronic violator is the person who is way off course in places

they shouldn't be with a golf car," said Constant Jr., who is assistant manager under general manager Normand Champagne.

"It has worked out very well," he said. "We developed it last year so we could have plusher fairways. People were muddying and tearing them up."

In six months of use, Constant Jr. said few have complained about the sensors.

"Most people are accepting it," he said. "The old and handicapped golfer may not like it, but we don't have any handicapped golfers right now. And the average golfer will appreciate the nice course that results from it."

Constant Jr. said the owners wanted the ability to manage the course with the least number of marshals.

"We do have two rangers, also, but this gives us efficient management of the cart path system," he said. "Also, we find that the wear and tear on our carts is minimal. We get

longer life out of the cart and have more control."

Ernest Poholek, an electronics engineer and inventor from Attleboro, Mass., who is the Heather Hill maintenance person, needed little time to turn his nephew's idea into a six-by-four-inch, weatherproof, electronic sensor that can be modified to buzz an alarm, speak a "Please return to the cart path" warning, or kill the engine.

Mounted near the rear wheel well, the sensor turns the engine off when tampered with. Also, a locking mechanism can be installed on the engine system so golfers can't access it and bypass the sensor.

Has it been worth it?

Definitely, said Constant Jr. The unit costs \$100 to \$150, depending on the alarm option chosen.

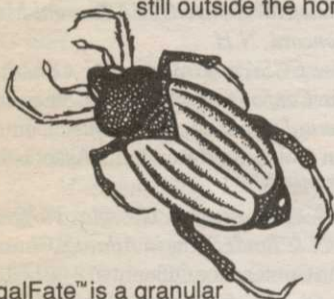
And the Poholeks say if anyone is interested in ordering some, they can have them built immediately.

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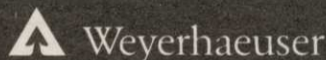
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