

Rounds are up! No, they're flat

Before you get all worked up, let me reconcile what appears to be a contradiction here in the pages of *Golf Course News*. I know what you're thinking: "That simply isn't possible!" Well, you're right.

On the front page this month we published a story regarding an increase in golfer participation and rounds played, according to a just-released National Golf Foundation report. Yet on page 47, in the Management Section, we published a "man-on-the-street" set of responses to the following question: "Assuming rounds and participation levels will remain relatively flat over the next 10 years, how will you compete for market share in your areas of business?"

Rounds and golfers did increase during 1995 — comforting news following a 1994 decrease in both categories. However, rounds played and participation **have** remained flat for the better part of five years. Certainly, they have not kept pace with the golf course stock, which has jumped by nearly 15 percent since 1990.

This is why we posed our rather pessimistic question to management company executives, who have seen this disparity in supply and demand result in frenzied competition for the daily-fee golf round. If course openings continue at their record-setting pace — and judging from the number of facilities under construction, there's no reason to believe they won't — it will only get more competitive.

By the way, we plan to pose similarly compelling questions to management company representatives on a monthly basis. If you have any suggested queries, contact us via e-mail at hphillip@biddeford.com, or fax to 207-846-0657.

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It had to happen sometime: A major shoe manufacturer has finally hooked up with a maker of spike alternatives. Softspikes and Reebok International will team to provide the golfing consumer with a ready-to-wear spikeless golf shoe, i.e.

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Hal Phillips,
editor

Good deeds making a dent?

Truly, have we bridged the gap, proven the point and affirmed it with environmental bureaucrats, that golf courses are indeed good for the earth's health? Have the national Golf & The Environment Summits, the state wetlands hearings, the small-town public land-use meetings finally educated folks who heretofore wouldn't even listen to golf's claims of white-hatted good-guymanship? Has all this made a dent in the cerebral armor of even staunch no-growthers?

Well, maybe that last bit's going too far. But apparently progress has and is being made — perhaps even as you read this column. Look over your shoulder: You may not see a Sierra Clubite weeping over the tale of how well-served the snail darter is by a local golf course; but he may be considering that possibility. And a year ago the thought had no chance to even exist in that person's gray matter. He/she would have dismissed it outright, and probably with a curse.

But listen to Maine Department of Environmental Protection Director of Policy Development and Implementation Brooke Barnes: "Whether it's golf or the paper business, the environmental ethic really is becoming part of corporate America. That's our experience.

These corporate people we deal with aren't just talking the talk, they're walking the talk. It's refreshing and it makes our job easier."

Got an example, Mr. Barnes? Yes, you say? And a paper company at that? Naw, come on!

Listen again: "The Cinderella story I think of is International Paper Co. in Jay," Barnes said. "They were hit with massive fines in the early '90s, and they basically went from a real environmental 'bad actor' into an absolute leader. They are way, way out in front trying a lot of new, innovative technologies, going beyond compliance, instituting pollution-prevention programs that are cutting emissions by 60 percent. It's exciting. It can happen. It's a success story all the way around."

Now, if a state environmental official, whose "mission" is "to protect the environment," says this about a paper company... I mean, it just boggles the mind to think how highly thought-of golf courses could be in some circles — even the circles that in



Mark Leslie,
managing editor

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Letters

NTEP FUNDING RAISES QUESTIONS

To the editor:

Thanks for printing my letter concerning the proposed cancellation of funding for the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). This letter generated a flood of letters to USDA officials supporting NTEP. We are very appreciative of the support of so many in the turfgrass industry [see follow-up story on page 15].

Your editorial brought up an important point concerning federal funding of programs important to "special interest groups." What programs should the federal government fund? Isn't the general public telling their congressional representatives that we need less and more efficient government? Initially, I struggled with these same questions.

Concerning funding of NTEP, the following information is important:

1. The USDA provides NTEP with less than 10 percent (\$50,000) of its operating budget. The remainder is funded by entry fees charged to companies or individuals that test grasses through NTEP. About 50 percent of this money is given back to the university scientists (in the form of research grants or contracts) who test grasses for NTEP.

2. The funding by USDA for

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WEB OVER-SITE

To the editor:

I appreciated reading the article on Internet marketing ["Marketing on the 'Net' wave of golf's future," *GCN* May 1996]. However, there were two errors in it about our on-line website mentioned therein.

First, the correct address is <http://www.iquest.com/michigangolfer>. Secondly, it's incorrect to say that the content is "golf courses only." In fact, our print edition of *Michigan Golfer*, now in its 14th year covering golf, is also found on this website. Such content as an exclusive Q&A with Corey Pavin, the treacherous greens of Oakland Hills, a feature on "spikeless" golf shoes, a preview of the Ford Senior Players Championship, and golf travel in Ireland all may be found there in current or archived form.

I enjoy reading your informative newspaper. You do a fine job on covering diverse subjects and topics in the industry. Continued success.

Terry Moore, editor
Michigan Golfer
Grand Rapids, Mich.

A WORD ABOUT OZONE

To the editor:

I read your article regarding ozone systems and golf course ponds with some interest. The article left much unsaid and contained quotations which might

tend to confuse or misinform your readers. The article states that a one surface acre lake would require 5 to 10 horsepower of surface aeration. Otterbine has recommended 1.5 horsepower per surface acre for the 17 years that I have been employed here. How this requirement could have been overstated from 300 to 600 percent is of question.

Further the article refers to the relative efficiencies of bottom-diffused aeration or ADS. The relative efficiencies of any bottom aeration system are related to depth. As the air bubble rises to the surface, it will tend to entrain water and circulate from bottom to top. Secondly, the deeper the water the greater the rising air bubble's contact time and the higher the oxygen transfer rate. In fact, research indicates that bottom-diffused systems operate at peak oxygen transfer efficiencies in depths of 15 feet. For every 3 feet the depth is increased, transfers decrease a corresponding 50 percent. Hence, in 6 feet of water, a bottom-diffused aeration system is only working at 12.5 percent peak efficiencies, making a surface spray aerator far more effective and efficient.

Lastly, ozone generation is not a new concept. The first commercial application was documented over 90 years ago in Nice, France. There it was used to clean water for human consumption. There are two basic meth-

ods of generating ozone; corona discharge and ultraviolet [UV] radiation. UV radiation generation is usually achieved by passing water or air past a special type of light bulb similar to a black light. As the bulbs age ozone output drops. Corona discharge systems use a permanent electrode system.

A major problem with using ozone for lake-management purposes is the high demand for ozone in large bodies of water and the relatively short half life of ozone in water (20 to 30 minutes). Due to the high degree of biological material and runoff often found in golf course ponds, ozone demand is extremely high. Corona discharge systems are used for large volumes of water (i.e. clean municipal drinking water and municipal waste). UV systems are better suited for small volumes of water (i.e. aquariums, etc.).

As Otterbine has been in business for over 40 years and has over 5,000 golf course customers, I believe we speak with a degree of experience unparalleled in the industry. The fact that Otterbine manufactures ozone generators, bottom-diffused aerators, horizontal aspirators and surface spray aerators allows us to speak with more objectivity than a manufacturer who has specialized in one type of product.

Charlie Barebo, president
Otterbine Barebo, Inc.
Emmaus, Pa.

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Public Golf Forum

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Golf Course News scheduled for Oct. 27-29, here at the Marriott Lincolnshire Resort. With education programs designed specifically for owners, managers, superintendents and developers of public-access facilities, The Forum will provide attendees the edge they need to survive.

"As the information source for the golf course industry, we have our fingers on the pulse," said *Golf Course News* Publisher Charles von Brecht. "This allows us to pinpoint the areas where owners, managers, superintendents and developers might really need expert business advice

and guidance.

"I believe we've succeeded in assembling a program that addresses these needs."

The Forum will feature four distinct education tracks—Marketing, Management, Maintenance and Development—each featuring expert instruction from proven leaders inside and outside the golf industry.

• The Marketing program is designed to help owners and managers "get the word out" via TV, radio, photography, the print media, the Internet and good ol'-fashioned word of mouth. For example, award-winning photographer Mike Klemme will tell attendees how to best market their courses through pictures;

Vince Alfonso, former president of the National Golf Course Owners Association, will instruct attendees on how to use local TV and radio to their marketing advantage; Rich Katz, vice president of marketing for Billy Casper Golf Management, will show owners how to economically promote their courses via the time-honored "Barter System"; and appraiser Larry Hirsh, president of Golf Property Analysts, will share 10 ways to upscale your operation—thereby allowing higher green fees while increasing course value.

• While most agronomy programs show superintendents how to spend money, the Maintenance track at the Public Golf

Forum concentrates on saving it through innovative turf care and efficient management. Indeed, The Forum is unique in the attention it pays to business issues faced by today's superintendents. Bruce Williams, president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, will share innovative, efficient staffing techniques. Terry Buchen, *GCN's* Savvy Superintendent and contributing editor, will weigh in with his exclusive "10 Ways to Save Money." Earl Shafer, the superintendent at Wilmington (Del.) Country Club, will discuss ways to use OSHA regulations as a cost-saver. Also, Chicago District Golf Association Turfgrass

Advisor Dr. Randy Kane will discuss agronomic problems particular to the region, while U.S. Golf Association Green Section agronomists Bob Brame and Peter Vermeulen will speak on Midwest turf problems and solutions.

• The Development program will employ a two-prong approach: Targeting both the start-up developer and the existing course owner looking to expand—indeed, the latter group accounted for nearly half of last year's 468 course openings. This track will feature architect Bob Lohmann on course renovation; Jeffrey Brauer, immediate past president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, on the particulars of expanding facilities from 9 holes to 18, 18 to 27 and 18 to 36; architects Dick Nugent and Keith Foster on reclaiming landfills and quarries for golf development (and how to use them as a marketing advantage). Discussions of demographics, financing alternatives and environmental permitting strategies will also be included in this track.

• The Forum's Management program is the strongest ever. Operations wizard Gregg Gagliardi returns this year with separate sessions on increasing profit margins on the driving range and in the restaurant. Walt Lankau, owner of Stow Acres (Mass.) Country Club—host to the 1995 USGA Publinx Championship—will share his experiences implementing and fine-tuning an automated tee-time reservation system. As any owner knows: If the price is right, the course is always for sale. In that spirit, the Management track will feature a session on "Making Your Course Attractive for Sale," featuring Mike Rippey, president of North American Golf, and golf course appraiser Sam Hines.

Information on attending the conference and exhibiting at the trade show can be obtained by calling the *Golf Course News* Conference Group at 207-846-0600.

Phillips comment

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no retrofitting required. Expect the other players in golf cobbling to quickly strike similar deals with the oodles of spike-alternative makers now crowding what had been a pretty static marketplace.

Reebok has chosen to equip its Performance Convertible golf shoes with Softspike Extra Traction cleats, "because they outperformed all other spikeless alternatives in our testing," said Phil Percuoco, Reebok product development manager.

The athletic footwear behemoth appears to have taken the "whole-hog" approach to its spikeless commitment. Reebok has agreed to respice, on request, any model in its golf shoe line with Extra Traction cleats at no additional charge. The manufacturer also plans convenience programs for clubs to go spikeless, including rental-shoe discounts of 40 percent of the standard wholesale price and shoe program for tournaments.



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