

FLEET MAINTENANCE: MANUFACTURERS OFFER THEIR MONEY-SAVING ADVICE

At a loss? Consult the Club Car manual

By RICK FARRIS

Having a good, working knowledge of your golf or utility vehicles, the proper tools, and consulting your service manual(s) — I personally prefer the Club Car model — can be the keys to maintaining your golf car fleet. Furthermore, your troubleshooting ability can ease identification of potential problems and stop you from over-reacting to what may indeed be a simply-solved problem.

Suppose, for instance, you're frustrated by a hard-starting engine. Let's follow a hypothetical situation from start to finish, illustrating how you can identify and possibly remedy a problem with your vehicle knowledge, the proper tools, and your maintenance and service manual. By applying the appropriate troubleshooting procedure, identifying the problem may be easier than you think.

Before attempting any troubleshooting or testing, check the oil in any four-cycle engine and determine its level and condition. Remember, crankcase oil is used for lubricating and cooling air-cooled four-cycle engines. Try starting the engine. Does it turn over with the starter/generator? If not, use the maintenance and service manual to help you locate the electrical circuit and components common to the starter circuit of the vehicle. The starter circuit in most gasoline golf or utility vehicles generally includes components such as a key switch, limit switches, fuses, solenoids, a starter, and a battery.

Use the troubleshooting guide in your manual to locate and test these

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Rick Farris is a senior technical training specialist with Club Car, Inc.

E-Z-GO recommends preventative routine

By RON SKENES

At many courses, the golf car fleet is one of the top two or three revenue generators. Golf car rentals are one of the main sources of income for the course. At the same time, the fleet is one of the largest equipment investments for a course.

Yet, all too often golf car fleet revenues are not what they could be because a regular preventative maintenance program is not in place. To produce the expected revenue, a fleet must be kept in top operating condition. Time spent on regular, preventative maintenance will not only minimize down time, it will maximize revenue for the course.

Preventative maintenance begins with the crew who handles the golf car fleet every day. As cars are brought to the staging area, the tires, steering and brakes can be checked. Does the car run properly? How does it handle? Are the tires properly inflated?

A visual inspection should also be performed on the car as it is brought to the staging area. Is there any obvious damage? All of these items should be checked every time the car is brought out. At the end of the day, the same items are checked. This routine takes no extra time and can be performed by the crew as they handle the cars at the beginning and the end of the day. Any problems should be reported to a mechanic.

Like the automobile manufacturers, E-Z-GO provides a list of maintenance items with suggested frequencies for checking them. For the periodic maintenance recommended by the manufacturer, set up a regular rotation,

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Ron Skenes, is manager of Marketing Services for E-Z-GO Textron.

Long-term profitability the key, says Yamaha

By TOM O'CONNOR

Any golf car fleet is viewed, in two terms, during the course of its life: As a necessary evil when negotiating its purchase or lease; and later as a source of revenue often taken for granted.

However, no matter where you are in the course of your fleet's life cycle, one thing should remain constant: Maintenance should be considered of foremost importance.

Tom O'Connor is a product manager at Yamaha USA Golf Cars.

When budgeting new purchases and leases, club managers should overcome the temptation to look at initial cash outlays. Instead, long-term profitability and the car's ability to withstand the rigors of constant use with minimal maintenance and down time should be considered.

New technologies in golf car construction are gradually having a positive effect on the cost of fleet maintenance. A perfect example of this can be found in the 1996 Yamaha Ultima.

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ParCar design allows for safety and service

By SONJA SAUEY

Golf courses today are interested in safety, reliability and performance — ultimately the bottom line. This is why Columbia ParCar designs all its vehicles with these issues in mind.

Insurance costs have risen tremendously, including liability. Features designed into Columbia ParCar vehicles for servicing, reliability and performance, focus on safety to keep golf courses from incurring these additional costs.

Preventive maintenance lists contain numerous safety equipment checks. Insurance costs can be controlled when these inspections are completed on a timely basis, and properly recorded for future reference.

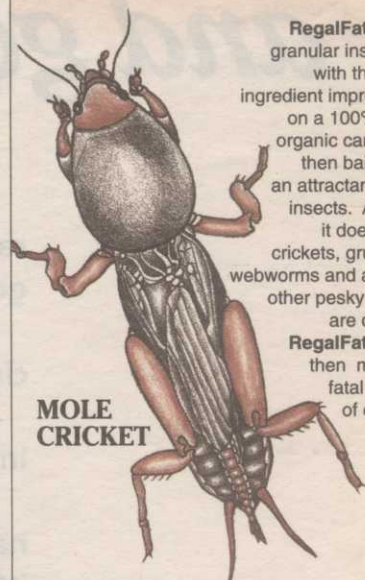
Monthly checks should be made of the reverse warning buzzer for proper operation. Make certain the system is fully functional since this may be the

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Sonja Sauey is director of marketing and sales for Columbia ParCar.

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Club Car advice

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components until you find the defective part. If your engine turns over, but will not start and run, the problem may be in the fuel system. Check the level and condition of fuel in the gasoline tank. If your vehicle has been stored for a long period of time, the fuel may be stale or water from condensation may have settled to the bottom of the tank. In either case, the tank, fuel lines, and carburetor must be thoroughly drained and cleaned and fresh fuel installed.

Check fuel filter(s) and air filter and replace, if needed. Also, check the function of the throttle and governor linkages. After making certain all are in proper operating condition, consult your maintenance and service manual, and check the items common to the engine's ignition circuit. Don't forget to include checking the ignition "kill" circuit in your troubleshooting procedure.

Next, perform a cylinder compression test. Remove the spark plug(s), ground the secondary ignition coil wire(s) and lock the throttle wide open. Using a standard compression gauge, turn the engine over at the RPM recommended in your maintenance and service manual and measure the cylinder compression. Low cylinder compression will cause hard starting and low power output in any engine. If your engine is equipped with solid tappets and runs rough, check the valve timing. Tappet clearance, which greatly affects valve timing, is crucial to engine performance. Remember, for every one-thousandth of an inch that clearance is out of specification, valve timing changes approximately four degrees.

If your vehicle's engine refuses to turn over or turns over very slowly after periods of normal running, there could be a problem in the charge circuit. First, check the starter/generator belt tension. Proper belt tension is an absolute must for proper generator function. Next, using your maintenance and service manual check the components in the vehicle's charge circuit. You could find the generator voltage output to be too low, the voltage regulator to be defective, or possibly discover a weak battery.

A good preventive maintenance program includes increasing your working knowledge of your vehicle(s), having the proper tools and manuals, and being able to troubleshoot in problem situations. By paying attention to detail and by sticking to your periodic maintenance and service schedule, you can (at minimal cost) reap the benefits a well-maintained fleet of golf or utility vehicles provide. If you have any questions or would like more information, please call the Club Car, Inc., Sales and Marketing Department, at (706) 863-3000.

GOLF COURSE NEWS



DRIVING COURSE REVENUE

E-Z-GO Textron has introduced two new refreshment vehicles: the Oasis and Grand Oasis. Both feature special modular refreshment centers manufactured expressly for E-Z-GO by Carts of Colorado, which specializes in designing, and manufacturing mobile and modular merchandising solutions that drive revenue. For more info, contact E-Z-GO at 404-798-4311.

Yamaha advice

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In an effort to reduce maintenance costs, Yamaha has designed a car that doesn't require regular maintenance. The pivoting and rotating parts on the chassis of the Ultima are made from materials that do not require lubrication. This advanced design results in considerable savings in maintenance costs over the life of the car.

Only the Ultima has a floor access panel that permits easy access to brake and throttle mechanisms, generally eliminat-

ing the need to jack up or go under the car to perform service. And most nuts that hold Ultima components together are captured, reducing the number of tools needed to perform service and resulting in faster disassembly and assembly.

These and other new technologies in golf car construction are changing the way fleet maintenance is viewed. Course managers can now realize increased profitability from their fleets in terms reduced parts and personnel costs, resulting in increased rentals due to greater reliability and extended service life.

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