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EQUIPMENT IDEAS

Light it up

At the Coco Beach Golf & Country Club in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico, golf course superintendent Dave Russell, assistant superintendent Jason Matos and head mechanic Hector Encarnacion installed bright lights on the maintenance equipment.

Two quartz halogen, 12-volt lamps were installed on Toro Sand Pros, Toro 6500 five-plex fairway mowers and Toro 4500 five-plex rotary mowers so it's easier for the operators to see where they're mowing turf and raking bunkers during early morning and nighttime operations. The lights will come in handy when the club hosts the Puerto Rico Open, a first-time event on the PGA Tour, in March 2008.

The light fixtures, which are for off-road use only, cost about \$20 each and were purchased from a local auto parts store. The larger lamp fixtures (similar to aircraft landing light fixtures in their lighting output) replaced smaller light fixtures on the equipment, so the wiring was in place already. It took only an hour to install them. On the fairway and rough mowers, the smaller light fixtures were left in place for lighting closer to the cutting units.



Travels With Terry

Globetrotting consulting agronomist Terry Buchen visits many golf courses annually with his digital camera in hand. He shares helpful ideas relating to maintenance equipment from the golf course superintendents he visits – as well as a few ideas of his own – with timely photos and captions that explore the changing world of golf course management.

Protection from the elements

The golf course maintenance department at Coco Beach Golf & Country Club knows how to protect its staff members from the bright sunlight and 80-plus inches of annual rainfall that occur in Puerto Rico without spending much money.

Inexpensive golf umbrellas were acquired from Sam's Club for about \$15 each. They're kept in place at the top of the mowers' roll bars. The handle is wedged in between the operator's seat and a plastic tube that holds the owner's manual. One-quarter-inch-diameter golf course roping secures them properly.

A traditional sunlight and rainfall cover is an optional piece of equipment for mowers. The cover, which can cost as much as \$1,000, would be attached to the roll bar and is available from equipment distributors or aftermarket equipment companies.

The golf umbrellas are used on the Toro Multi Pro 1200 sprayers, 3500 and 3100 Sidewinder triplex rotary and reel mowers, and 3150 Greensmaster triplex greens mowers, which are all used to help maintain the 36-hole complex that was designed by Tom Kite in 2003. **GCI**



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CUT AND PASTE

If you're a regular reader, you know I generally write articles pandering to ... er, I mean attempting to edify and inform you – the golf course superintendent. This month's column is a little different.

Instead, this humble scribbling is aimed at a new and untapped audience: your players. You know, those nice folks who shuck out anywhere between \$15 a round and \$15,000 a year to play at your place. In short, the idiots. Your idiots.

Thus, it's with great pride I present the "Complete Idiot's Guide to Golf Course Maintenance." Feel free to cut, paste and post this in the locker room as needed – if you dare.

Greetings esteemed fellow golfer:

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Pat Jones, and for 20 years, I've been privileged to write magazine articles about the art and science of golf course maintenance for nice folks like your golf course superintendent. I've met, worked with and/or written about thousands of superintendents and golf courses, literally. Along the way, I've learned a few things that might be helpful to your enjoyment of the game and your understanding of some important aspects of how courses are maintained. I respectfully submit the following polite thoughts for your consideration:

- It costs money to maintain these things, you bonehead. Don't expect champagne conditions on a beer budget. If you're paying \$30 a round, shut your gaping piehole, ignore the flaws around the edges and play golf, dammit.

- Only a handful of you fools carry a handicap low enough to appreciate the nuances of very fast greens, so stop yapping about wanting them all the time. Unless you're GHIN card has a single digit on it, you shouldn't even be allowed on greens running 11 or higher on the Stimpmeter. Do yourself a favor, you moron, and learn to appreciate the fact you're just not that good and fast greens will make you stink even worse and lose even more Nassau to

the clowns you play with.

- You know those big holes with the sand on them in various places around the course? They're called bunkers (there's no such thing as a "sand trap," knucklehead), and they're supposed to be a hazard. The really smart person who designed the course put them there to make the game more challenging. Being in one is called a penalty. Should the sand not meet your standards of perfection, don't hit into it. If you do hit into it – which is probably a lot because you suck – stop whining and swing about an inch behind the ball and follow through (repeat as necessary). Then take 10 seconds and rake the bunker, you lazy schmuck.

... I hope you've enjoyed this chance to see the beautiful world of golf through the eyes of your course superintendent.

- Don't even get me started about frost delays and cart restrictions. The weather is what it is, not some vast conspiracy dreamt by superintendents to deprive you of an early start or a motorized cup-holder for your can of Bud Light. Frosted greens and footprints don't mix, dog-breath. Driving carts on soggy fairways kills grass and makes big-ass ruts that screw up the course for weeks. By the way, you might want to consider the fact golf is meant to be a walking game and carts were invented for handicapped people, you fat shiftless turd.

- Just exactly how many of those freebie souvenir ball-mark repair tools do you have stuck away in that crappy old bag of yours anyway? Perhaps you could dig around through all the range balls you've stolen, find one of those tools and actually use it,

you dope.

- It might come as shocking news to you, but when it doesn't rain for a long time, grass turns brown. Did you skip biology class in high school the day they covered that whole "plants need water" thing?

- Unless his name is Carl Spackler, the person who maintains the course is not the greenskeeper. He's usually the golf course superintendent or he might even prefer to be called the greenkeeper (with no "s" in the middle, dimwit). Whatever you call him or her, the superintendent probably works harder than you and actually cares about doing a good job as opposed to spending most of the day surfing the Web for fantasy football statistics and stealing office supplies like you, you useless doofus.

- Enough already with the moaning about trees. Trust me, the superintendent hates them even more than you do.

- Last but not least, don't, under any circumstance, compare the course conditions you see on TV with the conditions of courses you actually play. The facilities that host Tour events spend a zillion dollars and commit thousands of extra man-hours to create a short-term illusion. Prepping a course for a televised event is like putting on a big fireworks display on the Fourth of July – it takes a lot of time to organize, costs a bunch of money and only lasts for a beautiful, fleeting moment. If you're ever planted in your La-Z-Boy some Sunday afternoon watching golf on the tube and think, "Our course should look like that," please smack yourself upside your pointy little head and get over it.

So, my fellow lover of the links, I hope you've enjoyed this chance to see the beautiful world of golf through the eyes of your course superintendent. It's my fervent wish these small insights will give you a new appreciation for the game and the importance of sound maintenance practices, even though they might perturb or inconvenience you occasionally. I know you'll accept my meager words in the sincere spirit in which they've been offered.

Now just shut up and hit the @#\$%!! ball. **GCI**

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