

ONE of the most startling developments in modern golf is the recent introduction, rapid acceptance and widespread use of the "golf car" on the nation's fairways.

"Are they good for golf? Are they here to stay?"

These are questions that, even today, are likely to start a verbal Donnybrook in almost any club grillroom! They trigger discussions reminiscent of the theological arguments of medieval times which swirled violently around the question of how many angels could dance on the head of a pin!

Golf cars are new, and in a sport so laden with tradition as is golf, anything new is bound to be highly controversial. As a matter of fact, golf cars have arrived on the scene so fast that the dust of their arrival is still about us, obscuring their true place in the golf picture.

Help Older Players

Originally introduced to permit older or physically infirm players to continue playing the game, the golf car performed — and is performing — a great service for golf in this role. Many older players have made significant contributions of time, effort and money toward the support and development of their clubs — it is only fair and just that they continue to enjoy the game to which they have given so much. Recognizing this, many clubs have permitted golf cars on their courses for the exclusive use of older or physically handicapped players.

Other clubs, encountering no special or insurmountable problems with the advent of golf cars on their courses, extended their use to all players desiring the cars. Still other clubs, confused by conflicting reports on golf car use, and frequently without further investigation, have arbitrarily forbidden the use of cars.

The fact is, a number of clubs that vote to keep the cars out one year often make a complete turnaround in policy the following year to permit the cars on their courses. All this points to a very fluid condition due to the lack of authoritative information about golf cars.

The golf car situation today is much like the weather, everybody *talks* about it but no one *does* anything about it!

Golfdom Launches Survey

Late last year GOLFDOM decided to use its extensive working contacts with the officials and managements of the nation's golf courses to conduct a survey on golf

HOW ABOUT GOLF CARS?

How many are there?

Where are they?

Where are they going?

By George Nivel

cars. Main purpose of the survey was to learn the extent to which golf cars are being used, who is using them and just how much interest there is in the subject. A copy of the survey questionnaire used is shown on page 90.

The questionnaire was sent out on December 6, 1957 to 3,818 golf professionals at private country clubs, semi-private and municipal golf courses throughout the country.

The response? Exactly 984 or 25.5% of the questionnaires came back, with returns from every state and from the District of Columbia!

This reaction to the survey is outstanding for several reasons; professional researchers consider a 5% return on a mailed questionnaire good and an adequate basis on which to draw conclusions — 10% is excellent and more than 10% is hardly to be hoped for. In addition, the Golfdom survey was mailed in the dead of winter, yet a major portion of the returns came in from courses located in the northern half of the country. Conclusion: there is real interest in the golf car subject and a real need for comprehensive information.

Although this survey was intended to
(Continued on page 90)

See Charts on pps. 52-53

GOLF CAR SURVEY

Reprints of the Golf Car article and charts may be obtained for 10 cents each. Send orders to GOLFDOM, 407 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 5, Ill.

TABLE 1 Analysis of Private Country Clubs Responding to 1958 Goldom Golf Car Survey

Years In Use	No. of Courses	Cars in Use			Total Cars Reported	Is Present No. Enough?			Cars Leased for Rental to Players		Cars Purchased for Rental to Players		Cars Owned by Players	
		Low	Average	High		Yes	No	?						
1 (or less)	81	1	7.5	75	571	24	46	11	215	37.7%	234	41 %	122	21.3%
2	122	1	7.3	45	886	68	42	12	415	47 %	209	23.6%	262	29.5%
3	114	1	13	65	1497	60	40	14	590	39.4%	342	22.8%	565	37.8%
4	72	1	14.4	85	1039	38	26	8	283	27.2%	282	27.2%	474	45.6%
5	36	1	19.6	80	718	22	9	5	200	27.8%	214	29.8%	304	42.4%
Total	425	1	12.3	85	4711	212	163	50	1703		1281		1727	
	(75.4%)				(82%)	(49.8%)	(38.3%)	(11.9%)	(36%)		(27%)		(37%)	

TABLE 2 Analysis of Semi-Private Golf Courses Responding to 1958 Golfdom Golf Car Survey

Years In Use	No. of Courses	Cars in Use			Total Cars Reported	Is Present No. Enough?			Cars Leased for Rental to Players		Cars Purchased for Rental to Players		Cars Owned by Players	
		Low	Average	High		Yes	No	?						
1 (or less)	26	1	4.5	15	116	7	16	3	41	35.2%	67	57.8%	8	7 %
2	30	1	5.7	16	171	13	14	3	72	42 %	55	32 %	44	26 %
3	23	1	9.2	38	212	11	11	1	44	20.6%	111	52 %	57	26.4%
4	15	4	21.2	76	319	7	8	0	132	41.4%	113	35.4%	74	23.2%
Total	94	1	10	76	818	38	49	7	289		346		183	
	(16.7%)				(14%)	(41%)	(52%)	(7%)	(35.3%)		(42.3%)		(22.4%)	

TABLE 3

Analysis of Municipal Golf Courses Responding to 1958 Golfdom Golf Car Survey

Years In Use	No. of Courses	Cars in Use			Total Cars Reported	Is Present No. Enough?			Cars Leased for Rental to Players		Cars Purchased for Rental to Players		Cars Owned by Players	
		Low Average High				Yes	No	?						
1 (or less)	14	1	3.8	8	53	2	4	8	27	51 %	15	28.3%	11	20.7%
2	16	1	7	14	113	10	4	2	46	40.7%	46	40.7%	21	18.6%
3	14	1	5	15	74	9	5	0	30	40.4%	27	36.6%	17	23 %
Total	44	1	5.3	15	240	22	13	10	103		88		49	
	(7.9%)				(4%)	(48.8%)	(28.8%)	(22.4%)	(43%)		(36.6%)		(20.4%)	

TABLE 4

Response to Question No. 6 in 1958 Golfdom Golf Car Survey

"Who at your course was responsible for securing the cars?"

Who is Responsible
For Bringing Golf
Cars Into Course

	Private	%	Semi- Private	%	Munici- pal	%	Total	%
Golf Professional	279	63%	71	71%	41	87%	391	66.4%
Players or members	52	11%	8	8%	4	8%	64	10 %
Green committee or Board of Directors	50	11%	1	—	—	—	51	8 %
No answer	29	6.5%	7	7%	1	—	37	6.2%
Owner of course	3	—	5	5%	—	—	8	—

TABLE 5

Response to Question No. 7 in 1958 Golfdom Golf Car Survey

"What are your major problems with Golf Cars?"

Comments	Private	%	Semi- Private	%	Munici- pal	%	Total	%
Player misuse	188	42.4%	41	41.4%	25	53%	209	38.8%
Servicing	131	30 %	26	26.2%	15	32%	172	29.2%
Garaging	133	30 %	23	23.2%	11	23%	167	28.3%
No problems	49	11 %	7	7 %	2	—	58	9.8%
No comment	33	8 %	13	13 %	6	12%	52	8.8%
Batteries — trouble or inadequate	35	8 %	5	5 %	2	—	42	7 %
Battery charging	21	4.7%	2	—	1	—	24	4 %
Course terrain	16	3.6%	—	—	—	—	16	2.7%

How About Golf Cars

(Continued from page 51)

be a preliminary exploration of the golf car picture, to uncover certain basic facts in order to get a better idea of what information might be obtained through later and more complete questionnaires, a wealth of significant data was uncovered which we can examine best by looking at the results of each question as it was asked in the survey.

Answers to Survey

QUESTION 1. Are Golf Cars in use at your course?

Of the 984 professionals answering, 563, or 57.4% said they had golf cars in use from less than 1 year, up to 5 years. 421, or 42.7% said they had no golf cars in use at present.

QUESTION 2. If so (if you have cars), how many? Are they enough?

5769 golf cars were reported in use by courses having them. Tables I, II and III show how cars in use are divided among private, semi-private and municipal golf courses. Tables also show breakdown of courses in each category by years of use. Thus, the 425 private courses (75.4% of courses reported having cars) have 4711 or 82% of cars reported. 94 semi-private courses (16.7% of courses) report 818 or 14% of cars in use. Municipal courses (44 or 7.9% of courses reporting) indicated 240 cars or 4% of cars in use.

Examination of tables I, II and III will also reveal the answer to the second half of question 2: "Are these enough?" Note that, in each category (private, semi-private and municipal) 50% or more of the courses either indicated more cars were needed or they were undecided.

QUESTION 3. How many years have you had golf cars?

Of the 563 golf courses of all types reporting golf cars in use, 121 or 21.5% had cars 1 year or less; 168 or 29.8% had cars 2 years; 151 or 26.7% had cars 3 years; 87 or 15.5%, 4 years; and 36 courses or 6.5% had cars 5 years. Tables I, II, and III show a breakdown of private, semi-private and municipal courses by numbers of years cars have been in use.

QUESTION 4. If you are not now using cars are they contemplated in 1958?

Of the 421 golf professionals who reported no golf cars presently in use at their courses:

69 or 16.3% said they will get cars in 1958:

at 35 private clubs

2,738,162 Doz. Balls Sold in '57

A total of 2,738, 162 dozen golf balls were sold in 1957, according to figures released by the Golf Ball Manufacturers Assn. Sales in 1957 were almost identical with those of 1956 although the weather in the latter year generally was more favorable for golf. Prospects for 1958 are considered bright by John W. Sproul, pres. of GBMA, who says that a steadily increasing number of golfers and a gain in course facilities indicate an increase in sales.

at 28 semi-private clubs
at 6 municipal golf courses
90 or 21.4% were undecided or did not answer whether they would get cars in 1958:
at 44 private clubs.
at 32 semi-private clubs.
at 14 municipal golf courses
262 or 62.3% said they would not get cars in 1958:
at 110 private clubs.
at 95 semi-private clubs.
at 57 municipal golf courses.

QUESTION 5. Number of cars secured on the following basis:

- (a) Leased from makers for rental to your players?
- (b) Purchased outright for rental to your players?
- (c) Individually owned by players?

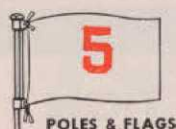
The survey revealed that, of the 5769 cars reported in use, 2095 or 36.3% are leased from makers for rental to players; 1715 or 29.7% were purchased outright for rental to players; and 1959 or 34% are individually owned by players.

Careful examination of columns 9, 10 and 11 in tables I, II and III, shows a significant and growing trend over the past 5 years toward 'fleet' operation of golf cars at golf courses, making cars available to players on a rental basis. Experience has proven that golf car fleet operation is more practical and permits better control of car use. This results in smoother handling and more efficient maintenance with greater convenience to player-users.

QUESTION 6. Who at your course is responsible for securing the cars?

Answers to this question (see table VI) indicate that, following the decision by club officials that golf cars are to be made available, the professional, in 66.5% of the

Use the best GOLF COURSE EQUIPMENT Ask for **PAR AIDE** Products



POLES & FLAGS



ALUMINUM
TEE MARKER



PLASTIC
TEE MARKER



HOLE CUTTER OR
TURF MENDER



PRACTICE
GREENS MARKER

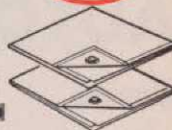
PAR AIDE JR. AND SR.
GOLF BALL WASHERS
AND ACCESSORIES



CUPS



CUP SETTER



TEE
HAND TOWELS



G. B. W.
DETERGENT

For detailed information write to: **PAR AIDE PRODUCTS CO., Dept. G, 1457 Marshall Ave., St. Paul 4, Minn.**

clubs reporting, was either consulted or assigned the task of securing data on the make, the number needed and the basis on which the machines were to be acquired.

QUESTION 7. What are your major problems with golf cars?

Table V lists the comments received in answer to this question — and they are significant. The majority of complaints — player misuse, servicing and garaging — reflect problems that are really 'growing pains' of a new development in golf and which are even now being solved and corrected through pre-education of club officials, club management and players. That these 'problems' are not permanent or insoluble is borne out by the significant number of clubs which definitely stated they had no problems in regard to golf cars! It is interesting to note that many of the clubs listing the three major problems in answer to this question indicated they needed more cars to meet the demand and were planning to get them.

Conclusions Reached

Golf cars are here to stay; their many advantages outweigh the various disadvantages that develop (and often later

disappear through use) in local situations. With player demand for golf cars steadily increasing, each year more and more clubs will have to face the recurring question: "Shall we, or shall we not, make golf cars available at our club?" However, there is a crying need for more information to guide clubs in their decisions on this point — and in planning intelligently for the introduction and sensible use of cars on golf courses. To date, experience by trial and error — for lack of specific information — shows a real need for pre-education of players and club officials.

Realizing the need for more information on the golf car situation, as underlined by the preliminary study it has already made, GOLFDOM will continue to survey the subject. Additional questionnaires will be prepared dealing with specific areas of information relating to demand for cars, their intelligent use and management, maintenance and storage. This information will be presented through additional articles on golf cars in these pages and through a "Golf Car Forum" in which comments, suggestions, and questions submitted by GOLFDOM readers will be featured.