

*Panelists decide cars
aren't menace some people
think they are — but driver
education still is needed*



CDGA Explores The Golf Car Controversy

THE controversial golf car situation was thoroughly explored on Mar. 14 at Oak Park (Ill.) CC when representatives of a large number of private clubs in the Chicago District met to exchange their views on car management. The discussion was the outgrowth of a spirited session on golf cars at the GCSA national convention in January which turned out to be inconclusive because sufficient time was not allotted it on the education program.

More than 100 presidents, green and golf chmn., supts. and pros from CDGA clubs attended the Oak Park meeting. Charles Eckstein, Chicago Dist. pres., and Dr. John Walters, its green chmn., were hosts at the gathering.

Panel Treatment

The discussion was in the form of a panel treatment of the subject. Joe Graffis, GOLFDOM publisher, who had been in charge of the GCSA golf car seminar, was moderator of the Oak Park proceedings. Green chmn. and supts. from five clubs in the Chicago area, made up the panel and following their speeches the session was devoted to questions and answers and an

airing of views by persons in the audience.

Panel members included Robert Podesta, green chmn., and Robert Williams, supt., representing Beverly CC, Chicago; E. C. Brown, green chmn., and Carl Hoppman, Aurora (Ill.) CC; Arthur Millas, green chmn. and Gordon Brinkworth, supt., Olympia Fields CC; Russell Head, golf car chmn., and Gerald Dearie, supt., Edgewater CC; and Robert L. David of the car committee of Lake Shore CC and Adolph Bertucci, its supt.

Panelists didn't give the cars a 100 per cent endorsement, but they generally agreed that they are not nearly the menace that many persons try to make them out to be. Probably the most significant thing that was brought out is that cars are charged with a lot of damage caused by golf's foot soldiers who still account for 90 per cent of the traffic.

Rental Units Favored

Bob Podesta said that he occasionally thinks that cars bring out the worst in everyone, but like TV, they are here to stay. Beverly CC is in favor of a rental rather than an ownership system. That

means there is only one type of car to service and maintain. To handle the cars, Beverly has spent nearly \$6,000 for electrical charging units and their outdoor storage cabinets and asphalt pathways. This expenditure is being written off over a three year period from car income.

Beverly quickly abandoned the idea of confining cars to rough areas. Caddies must be employed by car users and since the caddies are required to carry the bags, this restrains drivers to cruising at a walking pace. The supt. is given authority to close the course to cars. Persons who violate vehicle regulations, Podesta said, get a letter of warning from the golf car committee, while minor infractions are handled verbally. Incidentally only one letter has been sent out in the two years that Beverly has had cars.

The following rules, printed on decals and posted on each car, prevail at Beverly: (1) Cars are not to be driven within 10 yards of greens; (2) They are to be kept off tees; (3) Brakes are to be locked on inclines if car is to be unattended; (4) Don't make sharp turns at high speed or on downslopes; (5) Avoid carrying clubs or dangling feet while riding.

Supt. Bob Williams, who moved from Beverly to Chicago's Bob o' Link in March, pointed out that cars can cause soil compaction, grass damage in heavily travelled areas, tire ruts if used while the ground is wet, tearing of turf by quick turning, spinning of wheels and quick stopping and starting. He said this damage may be partly offset by an additional aeration every year and by increased use of fertilizer. It is Williams' observation that watered bent fairways can take traffic of 25 to 30 cars daily.

Damage Overexaggerated?

Williams also stated that supposed damage caused by cars may be somewhat overexaggerated. The reason: A caddie, carrying a bag, exerts twice as much pressure per sq. in. on turf as a car and a workman or a golfer about 75 per cent more. A tractor, however, exerts only about half as much pressure or weight as the average golf car. Williams also pointed out that at Beverly, walking golfers play ten times as many rounds as riding ones and that possibly far more than a fair share of damage is being charged to the cars.

At Aurora, according to E. C. Brown, the club feels that cars can be better controlled if owned individually. It is felt that under this arrangement, the owner handles the car more carefully because he doesn't

Golf Day Handicaps

Men amateurs who match their scores against those of Tommy Bolt and Dow Finsterwald in the annual National Golf Day debate will, of course, play their normal handicaps. Women will be permitted to use their regular handicaps less seven strokes. Golfers without handicaps can play the Calloway system in which scores of the four worst holes are deducted from the gross to give the net. Golf Day is June 6 but players can submit their official rounds any time between May 31 and June 6.

want to damage his own property, and, as a result, the course itself is not as badly mauled as it is when car rental conditions prevail. Brown expressed the opinion that if speed is controlled, cars won't be much of a menace, either to other players or the turf.

Carl Hoppman, Aurora's supt., who has authority to rule cars off the course when weather or other conditions aren't right, feels that blacktopped paths are the answer to handling car traffic. Tests made at Aurora definitely showed that blacktop roadways are preferable to sod pathways. Hoppman added that in case of light or moderate rain, it isn't always necessary to put the "No Golf Car" sign out but low spots in the fairways and roughs should be roped off or placed off limits so that they are protected from damage.

Members Underwrite Garage Cost

All cars at Olympia Fields are privately owned, according to Arthur Millas of the green committee. Each car is garaged, but before a new garage or addition is built, 12 persons have to agree to underwrite its construction cost, which is around \$3,800. Cars cannot be owned in partnership and generally they can be used only by the member and his wife. One full time employee takes care of most of the maintenance work. His salary, and that of a man who helps him in the summer-time, are paid by car owners.

Members at Olympia who are 50 or older and need a car to play golf are permitted to own them. Millas said he thought the age restriction would be lowered this year.

Gordon Brinkworth, Olympia's supt., declared that it is the duty of the greenmaster to provide the best possible conditions for car operation. At Olympia, Brink-

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CDGA Discusses Golf Cars

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worth said, approaches to bridges have been asphalted along with paths leading up steep hills and to elevated tees. Bridge approaches, incidentally, should be built in large fan shapes so that wear and tear aren't concentrated in any one spot.

Driver Education Recommended

It is Brinkworth's opinion, that there is still quite a bit that can be done in educating drivers how to handle cars. He recommends that all drivers be checked out on proper starting and stopping, turning and parking maneuvers and also be fully informed as to why certain parts of the course have to have some kind of traffic restrictions.

Edgewater GC, the home club of Chick Evans and thereby the cradle of the caddie scholarship plan, debated for a long time before allowing golf cars to be used, according to Russell Head of the committee. But members voted overwhelmingly in favor of the vehicles and they were brought in. At first, a medical statement was necessary for ownership but now there are no restrictions.

Owners pay \$200 yearly for storage and service. There are more than 50 cars at the course and garaging is becoming something of a headache. However, a new garage probably will be built in 1959 at a cost of about \$25,000, but since the golf car operation is a profitable one for the club, this cost will be rather quickly amortized.

Gerald Dearie, Edgewater's supt., pointed out that since the course covers only 92 acres, traffic is more concentrated there than it is at most clubs. Cars were first confined to the rough, then permitted to be used on the fringes of the fairways but now they have the run of the course except, of course, for areas around greens and tees. Overall damage to turf has been less noticeable since the drivers have been given freedom of the fairways.

Boon to Elderly Players

"Contrary to what you may have been led to believe," Dearie said, "cars do less damage during wet weather than they do when the ground is extremely dry and the grass is showing signs of wilting." Golf vehicles, Dearie concluded, make possible many rounds that otherwise couldn't be played, and the fact that they are a boon to older or handicapped golfers should always be taken into consideration when their desirability is discussed.

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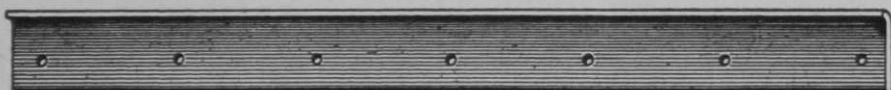
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Car ownership and traffic at Lake Shore CC, according to Robert L. David, always have been governed by a very explicit set of rules. A 22-page booklet listing them is available from the club, although the supply is limited. Co-ownership by two families is permitted and cost of garaging and servicing is paid entirely by car owners. David said that although it is impossible for a club to dictate to members what kind of a car they should buy, he thinks it is desirable to have only one and not more than two models because of maintenance considerations.

Adolph Bertucci, Lake Shore's supt., said that the advent of cars resulted in the building of some sorely needed bridges at his club. Carways also were built at a surprisingly low cost. The 26 cars at the club are housed in eight garages and eight more will be built to take care of an anticipated increase in vehicles.

In the question and answer and discussion period that followed the panel treatment of the golf car situation, these things were brought out:

Many younger players (35 and under) particularly like to use cars for twilight golf so that they are sure of getting in 18 holes.

Some insurance companies include golf car protection in regular automobile insurance policies. It is advisable to check your policy or consult your agent to see if you have this extended coverage.

If the supt. closes the course to car traffic in the morning he should remain on the premises in case conditions change so that the restriction can be lifted in the afternoon.

Serious rules violations should be dealt with by the golf car committee.

Clubs should take all possible precautions to prevent theft or vandalism.



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