

Metropolitan Has 7.7 Cars Per Club; Chicago Average is 21.5

Metropolitan Report

Recently released by the Metropolitan Golf Assn. is a survey of golf car usage and control by clubs enrolled in the association. Eighty private clubs, representing 54 per cent of the total number in the Metropolitan group, answered the questionnaire. Fifty-two said that cars are permitted at their courses and nearly half of these have physical handicap or age restrictions. Three years ago when a similar survey was taken, golf cars were in use at 37 clubs.

The Metropolitan report covers association clubs in northern New Jersey, Long Island, Westchester county (N.Y.) and Fairfield county (Conn.). It is published under the title "Golf Car Usage and Control in the Metropolitan New York Area." Copies may be obtained from the Association at 40 E. 38th st., New York 16, at \$1 per copy.

A total of 617 cars in use were reported by the 52 clubs. Individual members own about 54 per cent of the cars and at 34 clubs cars can be rented. At most clubs, car users are required to employ caddies. The number of cars in relation to membership varies widely. One 300-member club has only one car while another with 190 members has 28 cars. Clubs, rental agencies and professionals own the remaining 46 per cent of the cars listed in the census. Rental rates run from \$6 to \$8 per 18-hole round. At clubs where cars are owned, the monthly storage, maintenance and service fees range from \$5 to \$25.

Information in the report was gleaned from club presidents and mgrs. and through a supplemental questionnaire filled out by supts. The Association, in a preface to the report, alludes to the deep interest taken in golf car operation by club officials.

Of the 28 clubs that do not permit use of golf cars on their courses, seven said that the matter is in various stages of "discussion" or, at least "under consideration for elderly or ailing members." One club reported that several cars have been tested and found wanting because of topography.

Chicago Report

THE golf car survey recently completed by the Chicago Dist. Golf Association reveals that 66 reporting clubs have a total of 1,421 vehicles for an average of 21.5 per club. This is in contrast to 10.1 in 1958 and 12.6 a year ago.

Chicago Dist. clubs, however, reported they are not going to follow the lead of George S. May of Tam O'Shanter CC, Niles, Ill., and ban caddies (Golfdom, Feb., p. 25) in spite of the great increase in the popularity of the cars. After announcing his decision to do away with club carriers at Tam, May modified his stand somewhat early in March and agreed to permit caddies to be used if members personally arranged for their services. Players, however, still are required to rent cars.

Nine Chicago Dist. clubs report that they have more than 40 cars and 18 others have between 20 and 40. Where more than half of the Metropolitan clubs require riding players to hire a caddie only 25 of the 66 Chicagoland clubs retain this requirement. About 40 per cent of the Chicago players own their golf cars as compared to more than 50 per cent in the Metropolitan area.

Routing Restrictions

A breakdown of the Chicago survey shows that 30 per cent of the 66 clubs require that car operation be limited to the rough. Most of the clubs insist that the vehicles not be driven closer than 30 ft. from the green, although 12 clubs have a 10 ft. limit and six have a 20 ft. limit.

Monthly service charges range from \$10 to \$40 with one-third of them being pegged at \$20. Only one club that reported on this section of the questionnaire listed its service charge at \$40 while two (or seven per cent) showed it as being as high as \$30.

The rental range for 18 holes is shown as being between \$6 and \$9 with 80 per cent of the clubs charging between \$7 and \$8 for the use of their cars.

One Northside club reports that it has 100 cars, the most in the Chicago district, and all are leased by the club. Another

Metropolitan Report

Under "Current Census of Golf Cars," 32 clubs reported having 1 to 10 cars; 11 were in the 11 to 20 category; six clubs have from 21 to 30 and three clubs from 31 to 40. The average per club is thus 11.8. In the ratio of cars to members, the 10 highest clubs report from 7.6 to 14.7 per cent.

As to limitations because of storage and servicing facilities, 19 clubs that permit cars said that they are limited because of lack of available storage space, battery charging facilities or consideration for the course. Among clubs limiting car usage, four have waiting lists of members who would buy cars and 16 clubs have rental requests in excess of supply. At the 52 clubs where cars are permitted, the average length of time they have been in use is between three and four years.

Physical, Age Restrictions

In the "Club Policies and Rules" section of the MGA survey, it is pointed out that 22 of the 52 clubs permitting cars have age and physical condition requirements. At 80 per cent of these clubs, caddies are required but are permitted to handle the bags of two players using one car. Caddies are forbidden to ride in cars at about 60 per cent of the clubs.

There are various regulations as to weight of cars and tires and use of horns and radios. Eighteen clubs require insurance certificates from players to cover bodily injury and property damage, and five clubs demand that cost of litigation arising from use of his car by a member be paid by the member. About half of the clubs permit guests to use cars and about 40 per cent permit spectators to do so. More clubs than not allow players to use golf cars in club tournaments.

Usage and Service

Control of car usage and service is pretty much controlled by boards of governors and green committees. Green committees and/or supts. usually have authority to suspend car operations because of weather, although in 13 cases the pro can make the decision. About 60 per cent of the clubs have attendants who handle garaging and battery charging service. Rules violations complaints and penalties are handled in most cases by green or golf committees although one club has a Golf Car Assn. that has

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Chicago Report

Northside club has 60 cars, titles to which are owned by members. None of the Westside clubs has more than 50 cars. At the Southside clubs, two have 50 or more cars. At one location, the pro has rental rights on 40 of 55 vehicles with the balance being owned by members. At a second club, the 50 cars are owned outright by players. No Out-of-Area clubs report as many as 50 cars.

Rental Situation

Rentals at North and Westside clubs are predominantly controlled by the clubs, but at Southside and Out-of-Area locations the professional, for the most part, is in charge of the rental business. Of the total cars in operation, 98 per cent are electric powered and the balance, of course, are operated by gasoline.

Here is the breakdown of cars in the Chicago Dist. for the last three years:

	Clubs Reporting	Allow Cars	Total	Ave.
1958	44	38	446	10.1
1959	53	49	666	12.6
1960	66	66	1421	21.5

Ownership is divided in the following manner:

	Owned by Member	Rented by Club/Pro
Northside	182	347
Westside	80	171
Southside*	127	124
Out-of-Area	187	183

*At one Southside club 20 cars are leased by members.

International Miniature

Franchises for the International Miniature Golf Tournament, to be played at Asbury Park, N. J., Sept. 10-11, are pouring in from course owners throughout U.S. and Canada, according to George Zuckerman, tournament dir. His office is located at Convention Hall in Asbury Park.

It Pays in L. A.

Persons who oppose the building of municipal golf courses should study the Los Angeles situation before voicing their opposition. In 1958-59, L. A.'s 11 municipally operated courses grossed \$1,406,911 and returned a general fund net of \$292,285.

Metropolitan Car Report

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complete supervision of such matters.

Cars are given the full range of the course (except for tees, greens and hazards) at approximately 75 per cent of the clubs that answered this section of the questionnaire. At about 55 per cent of the clubs, routes and limits are defined and they generally cover distance from greens and hazards, parking areas in the vicinity of tees and prohibited areas. Distance from greens at these clubs range from 15 to 60 ft. and from hazards, 10 to 30 ft.

Instructions have been issued at 15 clubs as to speed, sharp turns, handling on hills, etc., while 22 clubs said they have not issued such instructions.

Special Construction

One of three clubs reporting on special construction required to accommodate cars, said that they have widened and strengthened bridges, cleared scrub growth to make continuous paths, graded and surfaced hilly routes or paved or resurfaced areas for parking. The cost of making these improvements generally was reported as "negligible" or "reasonable."

Almost 90 per cent of the clubs that permit cars have year-around storage. Amortization of costs of building garages and providing electric charging equipment has been borne by 29 clubs; members financed these facilities in nine instances, the pro in two, a rental agency in one, and in one case they were donated by a member. Write-offs, where clubs own cars, are handled as a percentage of income from rentals, by a depreciation charge or a general write-off. Garage construction costs per car were around \$350 but there was no firm figures established for wiring and charger installations.

Rental income fluctuated quite widely. There is no true indication that a large fleet of cars will return a profit and a small fleet, a loss, the survey shows. One club noted that it is not in the rental business "to make a profit."

Here to Stay

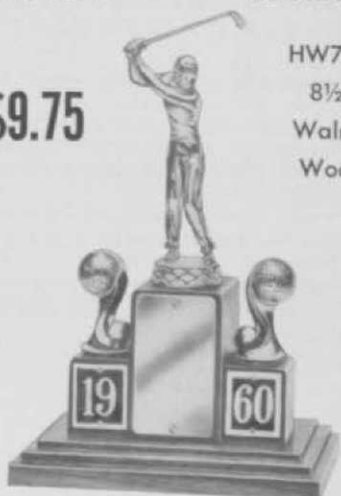
Clubs that already permit cars, according to the MGA survey, are almost unanimous in pointing out that once they are introduced they are "here to stay." Seven of 35 clubs feel that car ownership should be vested in the club; 14 prefer to have the vehicles owned

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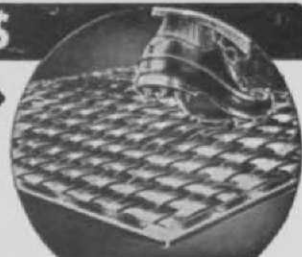
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by members; 10 think they should be the property of a rental agency; and four would have the pro owning and running the car concession.

Under a section, "Effect of Car Usage on Caddies," 23 of 27 clubs say that golf cars haven't resulted in a dropoff in the number of bag carriers employed. Twenty-one clubs feel that caddie morale hasn't been affected by the advent of the vehicles while two say that it has. Caddiemasters at seven clubs approve the use of car as compared to five who don't.

More than 60 per cent of the clubs feel that proper etiquette is completely observed by drivers and 75 per cent report that their drivers are 100 per cent conscientious.

As for the supt. who has been regarded as somewhat unreconstructed in the matter of cars, the MGA survey reports the following: Fifty per cent of the greensmen feel that cars should have free run of the course (tees, greens, hazards excepted, of course); nine of 16 would confine the vehicles to the rough; four of 10 would have marked

routes; and 14 of 16 would bar cars from certain areas.

Most damage, according to the supts., seems to be done to the rough and aprons, although green approaches, low fairway areas and bottleneck areas also are mentioned. Compaction, rutting, tire tracks, grass tears and general wear are cited as nature of damage. About 90 per cent of the supts. who committed themselves as to whether damage generally is repairable said "Yes," but about 50 per cent of those to whom this question was submitted made no comment. Ten of 22 supts. think there can be long run serious damage caused by cars; four don't think so; one said he did not know; and seven did not comment.

Some typical comments by supts. follow: "Cars are no problem when drivers are educated and the supt. is allowed to make the decision as to car use;"

"We'll have to do much more aerifying to check compaction;"

"Cars increase play, especially in hot weather . . . They also speed up play but it is more difficult for maintenance workers to keep out of their way."



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