



Clubs Take A Close Look at Golf Car Income

For the second time in two years the Chicago District Golf Assn. gave the golf car situation a thorough airing when it summoned representatives of its member clubs to a meeting at Riverside CC, near Chicago, late in January. Although the temperature barely struggled above the zero mark on the day of the meeting, nearly 200 persons representing more than 50 clubs, came to discuss all phases of what still is considered in some quarters as the game's big problem child. Everything from potential and actual damage to turf due to the use of cars to

the income that is derived from their operation was covered in a four-hour session that was devoted to seven main discussion points.

Andrew W. Gatenbey, CDGA pres., Charles N. Eckstein, the Association's tireless troubleshooter, and H. O. Hipwell, pres. of Riverside, were hosts to the delegation that included many green chmn., along with supts., pros, agronomists and representatives of car manufacturers.

Persons who attended both the 1959 and 1961 meetings came away from the Riverside conference with the general im-

Second Chicago District Conference Shows That Opposition to Cars Has Diminished But Some Problems Remain to be Ironed Out

pression that these developments have taken place in the last two years: opposition to cars on courses has greatly diminished; their novelty has worn off to the extent that hot-rodding no longer is much of a problem, but drivers still have to be educated to stay out of restricted areas such as around greens and tees; authority to bar use of cars because of poor weather conditions still hasn't been firmly vested in any individual or committee; much study remains to be made as to the precise cost of storing and servicing cars, and in determining what portion of car income should be allotted to repairing the turf wear caused by vehicles; and regardless of whether clubs want or don't want cars on their courses, they can't overlook their income potential.

The latter point, incidentally, was the first one discussed at the Riverside meeting. The celebrated 1960 experience of Tam O'Shanter CC, Niles, Ill., in requiring all players to use cars was described by Art Sweet. He didn't have to put too much emphasis on the fact that \$137,000 was grossed by George S. May's club from 122 vehicles operated on a lease basis. Everyone caught the former figure. Sweet didn't go into details as to what it cost Tam to build its 12,500 sq. ft. garage or install the blacktop paths that border the fairways. Tam employs three men to rake traps to keep course traffic moving, has two others working on the car ferrying detail and one man is in charge of battery charging. The club plans to make additions to its fleet this year and expects to gross \$175,000.

Some Costs Overlooked

Reports on car operation also were heard from several other clubs. Edgewater CC, which had 55 member-owned and 10 club-owned vehicles in 1960, grossed about \$2,300. Twin Orchards, with 45 leased cars roaming its fairways last year, netted about \$6,500. It has a loose medical restriction and those who have doctors' certificates must renew them annually. Fifty per cent of Twin Orchard's \$8.40 fee goes to the lessor, the club takes \$2.15, the professional, \$1.85, and the caddiemaster \$.40, Green Acres' joint operation of 25 private and 20 leased cars netted it nearly \$5,300 in 1960, but cost

of electricity wasn't deducted and no provision was made for repairing any turf damage. Green Acres charges members \$20 monthly during the playing season to maintain and garage their privately owned cars. The employee who handled servicing and maintenance of the vehicles was paid \$450 a month and given two meals daily.

In regard to the hiring of a service man to handle the cars, the various clubs mentioned above suggested, and manufacturers re-emphasized, that a minimum of \$400 monthly should be paid to the person in charge of the garage. If the salary is much less than this, it was pointed out that the overall car operation probably will suffer.

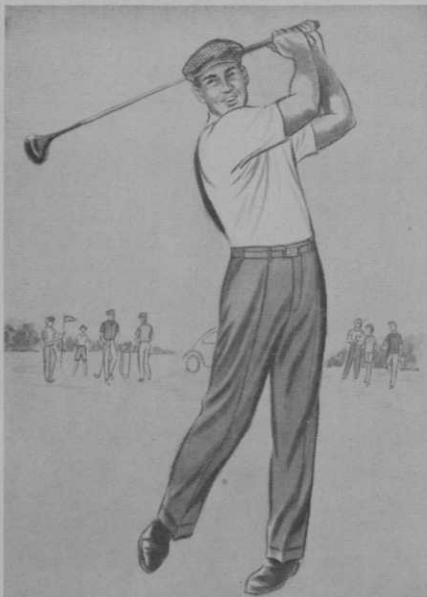
It was conceded that the storage of \$20 monthly made by Green Acres was arbitrary and not based on any cost figure. Also, its 25 cent levy for charging batteries was admitted to be taken out of the air. Some clubs that have made a general if not thorough study of electrical rates figure that it costs from 12 to 18 cents to charge a battery. James Lawrence, who gave the report on the Green Acres operation, stated that it was his club's experience that cars of different makes are more costly to maintain and it may be to a club's advantage to lease or buy its vehicles from only one manufacturer.

Club Within Club

One interesting sidelight of the clubs' experiences with golf cars was a description of the operation at Lake Shore CC. Here, cars are privately owned by persons 60 years of age or older or by players who have medical certificates. Car owners have "a club within the club" with their own committee, rules, etc. These members have paid for their garages, charging equipment, roads and other necessary extras, pay a prorated annual charge for estimated damage to turf, and each carries a \$100,000 liability policy. When a new member joins the club he pays an initial fee based on what it has taken to capitalize the golf car setup.

Turf specialists who spoke on the car situation included three supts., Al Johnson of Park Ridge, Ted Woehrl of Beverly and Bob Williams of Bob O'Link and
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Take Close Look at Cars

(Continued from page 32)

three agronomists, O. J. Noer, James R. Watson, Jr., of Toro Mfg. Corp., and Charles G. Wilson of Milwaukee Sewerage Commission. Most of these men agreed that grass and the maintenance dept. can live with golf cars, but added that much still remains to be done about educating drivers.

Compaction Problem

Watson, for example, cited the invisible damage, meaning compaction, that can be caused by the vehicles, adding that a full investigation of this factor remains to be made. He believes that the walking golfer also makes a contribution to the compaction problem.

The Toro agronomist said that it would be a fine thing if golfers could be educated to recognize the different kinds of turf damage and be taught to help minimize it, but wryly added that "maybe they already are being worried by too many educational schemes." He observed that perhaps the greatest damage to turf comes in the dormant season, particularly when frost is severe, and suggested that use of cars should be controlled even though play goes on after the normal conclusion of the golf season.

Charley Wilson, the man with the all-seeing camera, illustrated the points made by Watson via slide projector. Among his films were several showing how car traffic is routed along paths at different clubs.

Changes Mind About Cars

O. J. Noer admitted that since the last CDGA meeting he had changed his mind somewhat about golf cars. "Perhaps turfmen were a little too critical of them two years ago," said Noer. "If people want to use them it is up to us to find ways of growing turf that will withstand car traffic." It is Noer's observation that Bermudagrass possibly is more susceptible than Northern grasses to the wearing effects of car traffic, but he pointed out that courses in the Palm Springs area, where Bermuda prevails, have held up well because they have been planted to handle cars. Noer concluded his remarks by stating that it is time that clubs take a firm stand in designating some persons as the final authority in issuing a "No Cars" edict on days when the vehicles shouldn't be used.

Al Johnson, speaking in behalf of supts., reiterated Noer's statement. "Too often," said Johnson, "the supt. is put in the middle on the 'No Cars' rule. What is

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needed is a strong committee with the willingness and authority to back him up when he thinks vehicles shouldn't be allowed on the course." The Park Ridge greenmaster, incidentally, stated he feels that perhaps cars have their most noticeable effect in the three to six weeks dry period in midsummer.

More Aeration, Overseeding

Ted Woehrl of Beverly CC told how his club once had restricted car traffic to the rough only to find that when it is channelled in this fashion more damage is done than if it has the run of the course. An increase in aeration and more overseeding, Woehrl stated, probably are the best ways of combatting any damage done by golf cars, but clubs have to be willing to undertake the extra expense of carrying out these operations.

Bob Williams also used a projector in outlining his observations on golf cars. With slides taken at Tam O'Shanter last fall, Williams showed evidence of horse-shoe-shaped wear around greens and numerous instances where turf adjacent to paths had become worn because golfers cut too many corners or strayed off the blacktop. Some of this damage can be reduced, the Bob O'Link supt. said, by

getting away from sharp right angle intersections and fanning out turning areas at the ends of the paths.

Caddie Situation

At most clubs where cars are permitted, caddies still are being used. Mayne Madson of Beverly said that his club feels it has a civic obligation to help keep kids off the street by providing club carrying jobs for them. Representatives of several other clubs echoed this thought. At some clubs, one caddie is assigned to each car and it is his duty to handle the pin, rake the traps, replace divots, etc. Usually, he receives double pay for the round. All clubs have restrictions against his driving the car. The caddie-car combination generally is working out quite well, although in a few instances heavy-footed drivers are said to be making racehorses out of the kids.

The discussion of service problems was handled by William J. Freund, Victor Electric-Car div., Frank Oliviera, Cushman-Chicago rep, and George Westmont of Wisconsin Burner Co.

Suggests Training School

Some of the ramifications of keeping battery operated cars in first class condition were discussed by Bill Freund. The

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Victor sales mgr. emphasized that hiring a capable and conscientious man and sending him to a golf car training school is the best insurance for proper maintenance that a club can buy. He pointed out that the cars essentially are simple vehicles with comparatively uncomplicated electric systems and are virtually trouble free if small servicing jobs are performed on them on a day-to-day schedule. Body damage caused by careless driving and garaging, Freund declared, still is causing the lessor far more headaches than troubles caused by mechanical and electrical systems.

Inside Storage Big Help

Further tips on preserving the life of golf cars were passed on by Frank Oliveira. Studies made by Cushman, he stated, show that cars that are stored inside last more than twice as long as those kept outside, even though the latter may be covered by tarps. Battery life can be extended to as long as three years if cars, when placed in storage, are fully charged at this time and then re-charged every 30 days when not in use. Oliveira also claimed that more attention should be given to keeping tires properly inflated. He

said if pressure isn't kept up to manufacturers' specifications, more drag is exerted, with resultant damage to the tires much greater than it should be. This condition also reduces the life of the battery. As a final suggestion, the Cushman representative recommended referring to persons who take care of cars as "fleet managers" and not "mechanics." It is his observation that a big psychological boost is given to employees by doing this.

Gas-Operated Car

The gasoline operated car, which has made a fairly substantial impact on the golf market in the last year or so, was discussed by George Westmont. He recommended setting up a trouble-prevention program in which oil, grease and the radiator are checked on a regular schedule. In the summertime, particular attention should be paid to air cleaners and filters because a great deal of dust and cut grass are picked up by gas vehicles. Other than that, Westmont declared, the gas operated car doesn't call for any more maintenance attention than any other vehicle. People in this industry feel that the sound problem has pretty effectively been whipped in the gas car by the water cooled engine that effectively muffles noise

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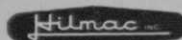
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and through more generous use of rubber mountings.

Westmont was backed up in the latter assertion by Herb Christiansen of the River Forest CC golf car committee who asserted that noise made by gas cars at his club haven't caused undue distraction to golfers. River Forest has been using the cars since 1959. About an hour a month has been the average maintenance time spent on each vehicle, Christiansen said. One car there has gone more than 300 rounds without any major overhaul being made and a new car, purchased last year, travelled more than 100 rounds on only routine checkups.

The Terra-Tire

(Continued from page 64)

of film were shown at this point — Ed.)

In late Oct., after a very dry summer, the ground was very hard; both cars climbed a 35 per cent slope with about equal ease. Both cars found little trouble running this slope as a side slope so far as slide slip was concerned. The course was hilly and although the fairways were hard, we obtained a 30 per cent power savings on the Terra-Tire car as compared to the car on regular tires. Had the turf been normally soft, the Terra-Tire car would have shown even greater power savings.

Nelson Monical of the Portage CC, Akron, O., had a utility trailer made using our tires. The trailer (*as you see*) is pulled with ease behind an electric car also on Terra-Tires. Notice there are no tracks left by either vehicle. One area was used for repeated passes to determine turf damage. Fifty passes a day for 10 days made a total of 500 passes with each car. The area was then allowed to recover for five weeks. The damage caused by the 600-6 tires is still visible.

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