
Good Housekeeping Often Is Neglected But It's Important

*Presents 31 Points to Check
Your Course Neatness Rating*

By **HERB GRAFFIS**

One highly paid course supt. asked several club officials at a district association meeting if they knew what makes a good golf course look bad and a bad course look good.

The officials guessed everything but the right answer: housekeeping.

"Good housekeeping is getting to be more important on golf courses every day as women's play increases," the supt. said. He added an observation that a number of managers have voiced: "In throwing cigarettes, cigarette packages, gum wrappers, golf ball packages and empty soft drink bottles everywhere but in the waste containers, women leave a sorry mess on a course on the evening of Ladies' Day. Some of them are untidier than men."

"Why don't you take that up with the chairman of the women's committee?" a club pres. asked.

The supt. laughed: "I'm scared to mention it because I work for them."

Course housekeeping isn't taught at turf schools, and only once at a GCSA conference do I recall any reference to the importance of the subject. That was a talk by Andy Bertoni. But good housekeeping or lack of it on a course has a very direct bearing on the salary paid the greenmaster and on the efficiency of

his operations. Any supt. who doesn't realize that disorder in any phase of course management wastes money doesn't use his eyes and head. Green chmn. or other officials or members who happen to own or be connected with manufacturing plants subconsciously rate course management on a factory basis. They know the high cost of sloppiness in their place of business. Nature in a mean mood may

damage turf and in this case the supt. has a valid excuse for it. But there is no alibi for sloppiness in course maintenance. Even as shorthanded as many courses are, the few men who work on them can be trained to be neat and have



the courses looking their best. The supt. himself has to set an example for his employees. He has to be constantly aware of the importance of good housekeeping or his staff will become as bad as the sloppiest players.

L. E. Lambert, pres. of the GCSA, like other successful supts. whose work has contributed substantially to the sound management of their clubs, has an effective policy for reminding his staff of the importance of good housekeeping. He tells his men: "When you step on a piece of scrap paper on the course and don't pick it up you fire yourself!"

Barometer of Management

Good housekeeping on the course and clubhouse grounds usually is an accurate barometer of the financial management of the entire operation.

I recall going to a semi-private course where bundles of money had been spent on the course and clubhouse, but the parking space and the grounds were littered with beer cans and bottles, waste paper and other trash. It didn't look to me as though any golfers would fall in love with the place at first sight. A few weeks after I was there the owner fired the supt. At the end of the season he sold the course to interests that have been making a lot of money from the operation. Last summer the parking space and grounds were immaculate.

Better housekeeping can share credit with improved Bermuda grasses for the notable rise in the standard of southeastern courses. Good housekeeping at the Masters, I believe, had a great deal to do with southern clubs, especially, the smaller ones, cleaning up their surroundings.

A southern course, the Dunes Golf and Beach Club, Myrtle Beach, S.C., has presented an example of good housekeeping in a way that is all too rare around golf clubs. Few clubs get construction debris cleared away for years. They run short of money and primary demands of course maintenance take precedence. But at the Dunes, the chmn. insisted on a budget for construction clean-up and a first class maintenance building. The result has been a big saving in money and time in the maintenance and development of a comparatively new course.

Educational campaigns on course tidiness are conducted intermittently at some



George Barnhart (above), supt. at Cherokee CC, recently was selected as "golfer-of-the-year" for 1961 by the Atlanta PGA, which departed from custom in giving the award to a turfman. George pioneered the development of bent grass in the Atlanta area and his Cherokee greens are considered as fine as any in the state. An award also was given to Gene Dahlbender, Sr., veteran Wilson salesman, who is retiring.

clubs. Success varies. One supt. once told us that he saved all debris picked up on his course during one week and piled it up at the first tee on Sunday. Behind it was this sign: "This TRASH was collected on YOUR course in one week!" Members couldn't believe that they were such slobs but there was the evidence and it had corrective effect.

What the Players See

Details (or neglect) that we have heard golfers mention show that the job is a major one for the supt. and his staff. Here are things, at least, that players notice and admire:

1. Tee benches, markers and signs in good repair and clean.
2. Tee benches located safely and in shade;
3. Bag storage at first tee;
4. Bulletin and scoreboard and starter's table by first tee;
5. Club entrance attractively landscaped, and safely so that traffic condition on highway and club road aren't congested;
6. Clubhouse and lockerroom entrances attractively landscaped and kept clean;
7. Parking area neatly marked and kept neat;
8. Waste containers conveniently located at tees;
9. Equipment building and yard attractively screened by landscaping and kept in order;

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Course Housekeeping

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10. Flags, flagsticks, ball washers, etc. in good condition and kept clean;

11. Golf car and bag cart areas at first tee, 18th green and in storage areas neatly constructed and maintained. (Often there is a division of responsibility here and the supt. may get blamed for an unsightly sector with which he actually has little or nothing to do.);

12. Bridges and approaches properly maintained and repaired when necessary;

13. Service roads in good repair;

Walks Well Maintained

14. Walks around clubhouse and between greens and tees well maintained and trimmed;

15. Shelters on course painted and area kept neat;

16. Traps cleaned of weeds and edged;

17. Streams and ponds kept cleaned. This applies to the banks, too;

18. Fallen trees and limbs and underbrush removed;

19. Water fountains kept clean and surrounding areas kept drained.

20. Service areas around clubhouse attractively screened without interfering with their use. (Another place where supt. may get rapped without having a distinct understanding of responsibility.);

21. Caddie area kept free of litter;

22. Good care of Women's tee area. (Many women golfers are getting fussy, saying they are treated like stepchildren.);

23. Marking posts or lines for out-of-bounds, water hazards and ground under repair, clearly defined;

24. Snack areas kept clean with aid of containers for litter;

25. Leaf removal, especially in the fall;

26. Pencil and scoreboard container at second tee;

27. Course equipment attractively painted;

28. Algae and weeds killed in ponds;

29. Repair of eroded areas;

30. Trap rakes in good condition and available on every hole that has a trap;

31. Identifying marks painted on tree trunks to help locate balls.