



Don't worry about Harley! Surrounded by these six lovelies, he's doing better than most people in the golf car business. The young ladies represent the local telephone company.

Maintaining, Merchandising the Electric Golf Car

The pro or person who runs the car concession can make it more profitable by learning to become a service expert

By HARLEY G. COSTER

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A sufficient number of well maintained golf cars make the game more pleasurable for those who wish to ride, and are a necessity for an expanding group of people who cannot otherwise play golf.

Merchandising in any business is the key to increased sales. How many times a day are you asked to purchase merchandise? Even the waitress who suggests dessert is merchandising. Why shouldn't the pro merchandise golf cars by constantly suggesting their use?

Every morning all cars should be on display in front of the pro shop, and ready for rental and not tucked away in a shed where the golfer feels it's an imposition for someone to bring a vehicle to him. Mass display of any product is an incentive for buying or using it.

Before the pro leases or buys cars he

should make arrangements to spend the necessary time to become an expert in their care. It takes about a day to do this and he will find great satisfaction in being able to service or supervise the servicing of the vehicles.

About 80 per cent of the cost of a service call to any club by a dealer involves travel time and mileage. If car maintenance is understood, down-time can be eliminated and profits increased. Cars should go to the dealer's shop for repairs only when absolutely necessary.

The running gear of most cars rarely causes problems. It is extremely important to inflate the new low pressure tires exactly as specified. Wheel lugs should be periodically tightened and brakes checked and adjusted when necessary. Once each year wheel bearings should be packed and medium weight oil added to the differential if needed.

Present day motors require little care as most are lifetime greased and sealed. On older motors equipped with fittings,

it usually is sufficient to inspect and grease twice yearly through existing fittings. If belts are used, these should be properly tightened and belt dressing applied twice each season. Brushes should be inspected every six months and replaced if less than one-half inch remains.

It is impossible to cover all the switch systems in use today. On many cars there are stationary copper contact bars to which should be applied a light coat of lithium-based grease twice monthly.

The accelerator pedal must operate freely and be properly adjusted. A pedal out of adjustment can cause the switch to remain in contact and burn resistors, wiring and motor.

If your cars have several solenoids, make certain all connections are tight and that the tap of finger switches activating the solenoids are properly adjusted according

to the manufacturers' specifications.

Watch The Batteries

An electric car is only as good as its batteries and charging equipment. Most electric car manufacturers equip their vehicles initially with 165 or 175 amp hour batteries and a medium priced automatic or semi-automatic charger. At a small additional cost, optional 190 or 195 amp hour batteries are available along with completely automatic chargers. These two items are absolute necessities and no new car purchases should be contemplated without them. A major percentage of electric car failure are battery failures due to overcharging and overfilling.

If chargers are non-automatic, several good hydrometers which incorporate thermometers for accurate true readings should be obtained. The hydrometer barrel should be kept clean and its use properly learned. A corrected hydrometer reading of 1.260 at an 80 deg. temperature indicates a fully charged battery. For every 10 points below 1.260 the battery should be charged 45 minutes at a 15-18 amp. rate. Every morning at least one cell in each car should be checked and charged additionally, if necessary.

Avoid Overfilling

Do not overfill batteries! Keep the water (electrolyte) level one-half inch above the plate rather than fill them up to the triangle or split ring found in most batteries. Wet spots on the floor under the car, excessive battery corrosion on the frame and constantly damp battery covers indicate overfilling and boiling over. If water is frequently added in small amounts, these things can be avoided.

When acid is boiled out, only water is replaced. Soon the acid becomes too diluted to develop sufficient voltage to activate the sensing device on an automatic charger, or for the solution to reach a 1.260 reading on the hydrometer. This causes the operator to severely overcharge the batteries in an attempt to bring them up to the so-called full charge. Overfilling is the cause of more battery abuse than any other factor.

Too often, entire sets of batteries are replaced when only a single battery is defective. A sensitive voltmeter, capable of reading in hundredths of a volt, should be used in checking the sets. It is inexpensive and will save its cost many times over. In addition, it will cut down on service calls. If the cells in a battery vary

(Continued on page 71)



When you operate in Indianapolis as Harley Coster does, you go with the trend in painting your car on Memorial Day.

Golf Car Merchandising

(Continued from page 30)

over 4/100 of a volt, the battery should be replaced.

Cables and Terminals

All battery cables should be kept tight. Once or twice a month they should be scrubbed along with the terminals with a strong soap solution and then rinsed. A handful of baking soda in a quart of water dissolves heavy corrosion. Terminals may be coated with a small amount of petroleum jelly, if desired, but not with a heavy coat of grease which melts and ends up as a conductor or in the cells.

Water from a municipal water system is satisfactory for batteries. Well water or water from creeks or streams shouldn't be used. Battery water should not be stored in metal containers.

Good completely automatic chargers have eliminated most charging problems. Any car operator will be ahead to trade non-automatic chargers for automatic equipment.

Charger plugs and receptacles must be inspected and replaced if excessive heat has caused deterioration. Wiring that shows the effect of heat or wear also should be replaced.

The following spare parts and equipment should be kept on hand: Sensitive voltmeter (about \$25.00); Temperature-

corrected hydrometer (\$3.00); Automatic charger relay tester (\$35.00); Spare tire, tube and wheel; Spare charger; Ammeter; Charger timer; Charger plugs and receptacles; Battery cables; Solenoids; Switch components; Brake shoes; Motor brushes and tire gauge.

Probably the one most important factor in buying golf cars is to look for a dealer with a substantial background, one who understands his product and will take the time to teach a prospective purchaser the tricks of maintenance.

Merchandising Tips

Going back to merchandising, the pro or man in charge of golf cars should take advantage of the weather. If it's hot it should be suggested that riding keeps the player cooler and comfortable. If it's cloudy a car will get him back more quickly in case of rain.

If there are members who have never operated a car, the pro should find a reason for taking them for a short ride and letting them handle the controls. Many new riders are started by this method. Some people think operation of a car is difficult and are too self conscious to ask how it's done. This is particularly true of women.

Much has been said about reduced rates for twilight golf, early bird golf and ladies' day. Any plan has merit that gets golfers out early on busy days or im-

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proves late play and helps utilize the course. A reduced car rental price for these periods has definitely brought out golfers at many clubs and is worthy of a trial at clubs that are looking for more traffic. Players who become accustomed to riding at reduced rates often become good customers at regular rates during normal playing hours.

Gasoline golf car maintenance was thoroughly explained in an article by E. I. Fisher of Kohler Engine Co. in April *GOLFDOM* (page 36).

Swinging Around Golf

(Continued from page 18)

Bob Conti is pro at recently opened Hawthorne Hills 27-hole semi-private near Lima, O. . . Seems as though about half big new motels planned or building have Par-3 courses . . . Miniature course building in a fair-sized boom . . . Elks open their new 9-hole course in Hillsboro, O. . . Begin building 18 for Wedgewood CC to design of Edmund Ault as feature of Northwest Estates, Inc. 536-acre residential development near Bethania, N.C. . . Oren W. McLain of Winston-Salem heads Northwest Estates, Inc.

Bristolwood Corp., Bristol, Pa., opens its lighted 18-hole Par-3 that was designed by George Fazio . . . Mill Creek CC, near Milan, Ill., in Quad City area of Moline, Rock Island (Ill.) and Davenport (Ia.) opens . . . It's a rather remarkable club of 400 members built by members who have contributed 50,000 hours of labor, says Pres. Roy Gillen . . . April 11, 1962 club's 128 charter members bought its land . . . Charter memberships sold at \$250 plus 50 hours of personal labor or \$350 without labor.

There can be some wild and woozy statements made in controversies over building or not building a municipal course . . . One fellow wrote a local newspaper about the proposed Danbury, Conn. munny course saying that "the total of the project, according to my mathematical calculations, amounts to \$1,930,000 plus 30 years of maintenance, an additional cost amounting to \$750,000 . . . making a grand total of \$2,680,000 . . . A terrific price to pay for 130 acres of land." . . . The man must be looking for another deal with Indians who sold Manhattan island.

East Lakefront development of Orleans Levee Board will give New Orleans three