

Is your club half safe?

by **Herb Graffis**
Executive Editor

Here is a list of 20 common hazards to golfers and bystanders at any course. Law suits and accident claims are making clubs more aware of these dangers and of the need for safety committees

Law suits and accident insurance claims have awakened private and public golf course officials to making long over-due surveys of hazardous situations on and adjacent to courses, in clubhouses and in other buildings on the grounds.

The *safety committee* is the valuable new development in golf business operations. At a public or fee course, the responsibility for noting and correcting conditions risky to players, caddies and other employees and to people in areas bordering the course is great. A person with the authority to take prompt action should be there. At the private club, with its committee operations, the safety inspection and recommendations probably are most effectively handled by members of the committee. The safety program is broken down so that the clubhouse, course and grounds, golf cars, roads, pool and other facilities and personnel are thoroughly considered. Findings are put in writing and various department heads are held accountable for making the changes required for safety.

The Institute for Safer Living of the American Mutual Liability Insurance Company checked 470 courses across the nation and came up with an estimate of 18,000 disabling injuries at golf courses during 1962. Increase of courses and play and other factors including neglect of elemental safety precautions make an estimate of 28,000 disabling golf injuries in 1968 a conservative figure. (Fire insurance inspectors, employee liability insurance regulations, and in some places, Board of Health regulations for pool construction and operation, usually account for almost all the safety surveys made at a golf establishment.)

Car manufacturers say the golf car situation has a parallel in industry where, some years ago, plant accidents involved heavy costs of lives and limbs lost, time lost, workmen's compensation payments, and law suits. Then, after attention of management was accented on accident prevention and safety education, production increased and accidents

Here is a list of hazards of all sorts, both to the golfer and innocent bystander, found at courses.

1. Club entrances onto heavily-travelled highways generally are landscaped so that drivers on the club lane or the main road are victims of blind gateway accidents. (There have been numerous fatalities near these entrances, among them that of the professional at a Michigan club.)
2. Golf balls can fly out of bounds into windshields of passing automobiles or onto lawns and through windows of homes adjacent to courses. (Whether course alterations, better fencing or landscaping could eliminate the risk is a matter for the club's safety committee to determine. And it should decide quickly because if these dangers exist only luck can keep the club officials out of court.)
3. Many of the newer golf course-residential developments haven't course design and home sites properly coordinated. Golf balls hitting children playing on the family lawn mean trouble, and a lot of it.
4. Roads on golf courses, whether for passenger cars, service trucks, maintenance equipment or golf cars, usually are after-thoughts and most of them need study and revision. (A lot has been learned about golf car traffic from the starting jam on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays at many first tees clear through to parking of the cars for service after the round. Not infrequently golf car paths from greens to the next tees are located so players delay following players, are exposed to risk or establish an area of heavy wear on the green.)
5. Golf car bridges, the paths to and from them and perilous slopes require inspection and correction. (A great deal of thinking and money has gone into making today's golf car a safe vehicle, but there hasn't been corresponding improvement made by golf club officials in car user education and super-

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were sharply reduced. In commenting on that development an executive of one of the leading golf car manufacturing companies said:

"Industrial plants throughout the country appointed *safety committees* and *safety chairmen*. Today it is normal to have *safety directors* in large plants." Country club directors when appointing committees should add safety committees. This innovation provides an opportunity to have more members active on committees and to remedy a serious error of omission in the club operating plan.

"Golf car manufacturers have the same problem automobile manufacturers face. They spend long hours and considerable money to develop safety devices and engineer their golf cars with safety very much in mind, but they can do very little about the car user who's driving thoughtlessly over the variegated terrain of a golf course.

"The American Golf Car Manufacturers' Association has spent many thousands of dollars on a nationwide safety program. If the safety committee chairman of a golf club or an official of a public or daily fee course in charge of a safety program will write the Association, (734 15th St., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20005) information will be provided regarding the many safety decals, posters, etc., that are available."

It might be very beneficial to a club to get a doctor, an insurance man, a lawyer, a man who travels and gets to many other courses and even a reformed drinker who has survived hazards of golf, to make surveys on safety of clubhouse and grounds. Each would see things in a light the other wouldn't. The club manager, the superintendent and the professional should then check these findings and evaluate them. Results should be discussed with appropriate people such as the life guards at the swimming pool and a county or state policeman who patrols the vicinity of the club, etc.

There's no need to detail the many perils to the pursuit of

vision and in car traffic conditions.)

6. Practice swings at the first tee where it's usually crowded is a common occurrence.

7. Awaiting golfers and caddies are often located in a place where a bad shot might fly.

8. At some places ball washers, bags and tee benches are ahead of tee markers.

9. Steps or paths are sometimes in unsafe conditions.

10. Depressions from broken drain tiles may account for injuries.

11. There will be tree limbs that may hit car passengers.

12. Trap rakes in bad condition or carelessly tossed are invitations to accidents.

13. Sprinkler head and hose outlets, hose left coiled at unexpected spots and tee benches in bad repair are other dangers.

14. Caddies relaxed and unheeding while their players are driving are hit so often that it's considered an occupational hazard. Only because of luck are the kids seldom hurt.

15. Parallel fairways with traffic in opposite directions are scenes of many accidents. Bunkering or landscaping to eliminate this danger is a job that calls for expertise.

16. Lightning presents a danger also. In the Rules of Golf book of the USGA (pages 67, 68), information on "Protection of Persons Against Lightning on Golf Courses" might serve to prevent some of the deaths on golf courses.

17. Drinking water supply on golf courses often needs attention. Again, only luck is preventing trouble.

18. The habit of some golfers dropping a cigarette on a green then placing it back in the mouth can be dangerous if the green recently has been treated with poisonous material.

19. Golf club employees sometimes are exposed to injury from chemicals used in maintenance. Machine operation on course and in the equipment building generally is so obviously hazardous that the superintendent educates and supervises his

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happiness on a golf course or in the clubhouse, but a thorough study is necessary—and urgent. Just as a reminder of how this essential is neglected, notice at your club in the men's locker-room how there are many items of male beauty treatments, but for a first aid kit, a package of adhesive bandages is about all that's around.

An adequate first aid outfit ought to be a "must" in every lockerroom for men and women. In addition, each lockerroom should have a list, prominently displayed, of addresses and telephone numbers of available doctors, nearest hospital, ambulance service and some golfing physicians' advice. An oxygen tank supply should also be on hand.

men and their working conditions. (But, again, here's a place for the safety committee's work. It's safest to check over every detail on inspection tours with the superintendent.)

20. In the clubhouse major causes of accidents are: people in spikes slipping on concrete floors or steps; bare feet slipping on wet floors of bath departments or spikes catching in worn carpeting. (Sanitation to prevent athlete's foot is standard practice now at any good private club or public or fee course.)

When the accidents happen, maybe those who were hurt won't injure or kill any of these fellows who could have prevented these casualties from ever occurring. □

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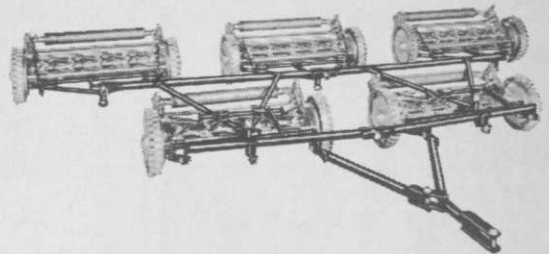
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