

Preparing your fleet

Preparing your golf car fleet for the coming season requires certain simple chores to get it in shape.

Check tires for proper inflation. You might consider ordering tire sealer. It will come in handy for temporarily inflating flats that occur to cars out on the course.

Next, inspect brakes, bearings, steering column and brushes on the motor; make sure the upholstery is clean and in good condition, and that the car itself is clean. Also, check the bag straps.

Give the battery (gas or electric cars) two or three full charges—12 hours each—over a two or three-day period. This is called cycling and it equalizes the battery. Before you do this check to see if the battery's water level is at the proper mark. Distilled water should be used.

Additionally, with gas cars, if the tank was emptied for the winter, just refill with gas. No special chemicals have to be added, whether the tank was emptied or not during the winter.

Once these items have been taken care of, your car fleet is ready.

Another aspect of fleet preparation for the coming season involves the course. Before and during the season, clearly marked paths for cars should always be in evidence.

If possible, have these paths in blacktop. Another important preparation is posting signs warning the drivers not to go too close to tee areas. When cars go over tees, the tips of the tees act as spears and can cause flats.

One other point to keep in mind at the beginning of the year is the age of each car. Check your records and see which cars in your fleet are four and five years old. These you should consider replacing at the end of the year.

Electric cars need a special consideration at the start of the season. It is advisable to send them around for only 18 holes, not 36, the first time out. This will almost insure that the battery doesn't get cell reversal, which occurs when a battery is over-used too fast after being inactive for some time. This happens when discharge goes too far and positive becomes negative. Correct this with another charge.

IN-SEASON MAINTENANCE

Daily maintenance of the car during the season is mostly an extension of what is done to prepare it for the opening of the year. Duties include checking moving parts such as brakes, bearings, motor and steering column, and checking the battery water level and tire inflation. Some

manufacturers recommend water level and tire checks weekly.

Other minor jobs involve adjusting belts if cars are not the direct drive type, washing the cars and cleaning the upholstery. Important daily functions with electric cars are seeing that the battery is fully charged and checking battery terminals.

Monthly chores for gas and electric vehicles include greasing chassis and all parts that need lubrication (manufacturers' manuals list these); cleaning and lubricating with thin coat of grease the foot switch (plate attached to gas pedal); spot checking battery's condition with an hydrometer and washing the top of the battery.

Gas cars require the additional work of changing the oil after 40 to 50 hours of use. This is necessary only with the four-cycle cars since two-cycle cars' oil is mixed with the gas. Changing points and spark plugs, adjusting the carburetor and checking the ignition system are also required. How often this is done depends on how much the car is used. For optimum use, cars (gas or electric) should be rotated so that each one is used approximately the same number of hours. □