



VERDANT FAIRWAYS, DEWY GREENS AND . . . A MESSAGE FROM YOUR LOCAL GROCER

We recently received a letter from the secretary of a golf club proudly informing us of their "ingenious" idea for putting a little extra cash into the coffers-selling advertising space on tee consoles and golf cars to local businesses. As each member of our editorial staff read this, the general reaction was to either recoil in silent horror or emit something tantamount to "Ugh!"

Of course, these immediate reactions are triggered by the mental picture of a golf course invaded by garish signs touting the virtues of everything from Honest Harry's Used Car Lot to Miss Lorraine's Beauty Salon. Such a practice destroys one of the primary pleasures of golf-brief respite from the workaday world. And if this were the only reason, we would still vehemently condemn advertising on the golf course. But there are other reasons and ones with more far-ranging implications.

Property taxes and rising operating costs are forcing many clubs in urban and suburban areas out to the "boondocks" or plain out of existence. GOLFDOM and its sister publication, GOLF MAGAZINE, have been making every effort to halt this trend. Through major articles, mailings and presentations, we have been trying to alert the industry to the threat and convince legislators of the value of the open spaces, which golf courses represent, to the creation of "greenbelts" and the protection of our environment. We also reason that in order to save these valuable courses and other open areas, their financial burden should be eased via tax breaks. How absurd these arguments would become if these very courses, which we view as precious oases in an asphalt-covered world, were covered with ads.

Any private club contemplating the sale of ad space also had better think about its nonprofit status. Remember 5 per cent is the limit on outside revenue, and ad income falls into this category.

If we sound unduly aroused, just check out some ski resorts where chairlifts are now "decorated" with ads. And how many sporting events have you tuned in on TV, only to be distracted by ads plastered around arena walls? During a recently televised world championship figure skating event, the announcer felt impelled to apologize several times as the competitors went gliding by a backdrop of ads. At one point, he said something to the effect that although they complained, there was nothing the network could do to eliminate their presence.

The situation in golf has not gotten to this point, but ugliness doesn't take a very long time to gain a foothold-and that is why GOLFDOM wants to see the idea of selling ad space on courses "nipped in the bud." We are not unaware of the financial straits that some facilities are in right now, and that they must find means to build up revenues, but certainly there are better and less offensive ways. And to this end, GOLFDOM will continue to present ideas to help such clubs out of their financial binds. But we will never advocate or condone anything that damages the image and spirit of the game.

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