

# Scanning the Web

Frank Andorka reviews online golf games

I have come to love golf as much as the next addict. But when there's 10 feet of snow on the ground in Cleveland, even I eschew going outside (preferring instead to sit in front of a roaring fire sipping Bailey's Irish Cream). When I need a golf fix, however, I turn to free online golf games to get me through the winter. If you're looking to play free virtual golf, here are some sites you should visit (all sites start with <http://> unless otherwise noted):

\*\*\*\*\* — **Bookmark it and return frequently;**

\* — **Look at only if absolutely necessary**

\*\*\*\*\*[arcade.si.cnn.com/cnnsi\\_swgolf/pubdoc/home.html](http://arcade.si.cnn.com/cnnsi_swgolf/pubdoc/home.html) — CENSI Country Club provides nine holes of challenging golf that force you to hit every club in your bag. The graphics are realistic, down to the spray of sand when hitting out of bunkers and the wind that wreaks havoc with your shots. The controls are instinctual,



making it easy to learn and fun to play. Interestingly, par 3s are the hardest holes on the course to play.

\*\*\*[games.espn.go.com](http://games.espn.go.com) — This is a registration-only site. If you're looking for arcade action, this game suits your needs. You receive a bucket of 25 balls which you to hit at greens located on the driving range. You get points for each green you hit. It's not nearly as entertaining as playing an entire course, but it's an OK diversion.

\*\*\*\*[www.candystand.com/golf/default.htm](http://www.candystand.com/golf/default.htm) — Looking for something a little different? Try this site, which offers three different golf games, including two miniature golf courses. Trust me, it's not as easy as it looks.

*Scanning the Web is compiled by Frank H. Andorka Jr., Golfdom's associate editor, whose online golf game is no better than his real-life one. You can reach him at [fandorka@advanstar.com](mailto:fandorka@advanstar.com) with column suggestions.*

# Battling Bureaucracy

**Y**ou think convincing your members to pony up money for new equipment is tough? Try selling an equipment purchase to government bureaucrats, and you'll realize how easy you have it.

John Fink tends two nine-hole public courses, Sligo Creek GC and White Oak GC, for the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission. He says buying equipment for the courses is burdened by paperwork and bureaucracy.

"Since I'm spending taxpayer money, everything has to go out for bids," Fink says. "I can't just go to an equipment manufacturer and purchase the product I want. It has to be approved by the commission."

Fink took the job in June 1999 after working at private clubs for most of his career. He knew working for the government would challenge him.

"You learn quickly that working for a government agency takes a lot more planning," Fink says. "I lost \$70,000 out of my equipment budget last year because I didn't file my bids on time. I won't make that mistake again this year."

If he has an exact piece of equipment in mind, Fink says he asks his sales representative for the exact product specifications so he can submit them with his funding request. It narrows the field considerably and, if everything goes as planned, Fink can get the brand he wants at the price he wants.

Unless there is a compelling reason to purchase another brand, however, Fink is obligated by law to take the lowest bidder for the equipment. That's why submitting manufacturer specifications — down to such items as seat-cover color and tire width — is so vital to the process.

Once his request is submitted, it usually takes two weeks for the commission to respond with the bids. If Fink does not want to purchase the equipment from the lowest bidder, he can send a letter to the board explaining why, which usually involves showing that it doesn't meet the specifications he set out in his submission.

As you might imagine, the process takes time. Fink recently purchased a skid steer loader and it took him three months to receive it — two months for approval and a month for delivery. Meanwhile, the players at White Oaks complained about the 60 tons of bunker sand that sat in the parking lot over the winter because the course didn't have the loader necessary to move it. Fink says he understood their irritation, but he couldn't move the process any faster.

"I didn't realize the purchasing process was going to be as involved as it turned out," Fink says. "As with any government job, there's reams of paper involved. There's good job security with my position, however, and it gives me more time to spend with my family. It has its advantages."

Just don't expect a quick turnaround on purchases any time soon.

— Frank H. Andorka Jr.



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