

Since golf's powerbrokers will be meeting during the next few months to discuss ways to improve the sport, why not ask for a few little holiday gifts for the industry?

These gifts are designed to alleviate just a little pain on industry professionals while bringing unexpected zest to recreational golf.

They are not gifts per se; they're more like holidays scattered around the golf season. Well, they're not exactly holidays either. More like celebratory weeks.

You know, something like, "Love Your Neighbor Even Though He Parks His Car On His Lawn Week."

Now I'm not suggesting any kind of "Love Your Pro" or "Don't Complain To Your Superintendent Week" (you wish!). These aspire to make golfers "Fall In Love With The Game and Help The Golf Industry While We're At It."

That said, here are my suggestions:

National No Scorecard Week: A month would be nice, but the addiction to card and pencil is so great that anything more than a week might be pushing it. During No Scorecard Week, all forms of paper and pencil are locked in storage. The scorecard pad on golf cars will somehow be disarmed to eliminate further fuel for the card-keeping compulsion.

Golfers will be asked to enjoy their rounds without documenting every stroke taken. Oh, they can still play a simple match, but nothing more while scorekeeping is eliminated for a whopping seven days.

Because someone invariably will argue that this might suggest the handicap system is a guilty party in making the card and pencil more important than life itself (where would they get that idea?), a USGA endorsement of National No Scorecard Week would be helpful. I know, six subcommittees, three legal reviews and several golf outings later, we'll still be waiting for an answer. But consider the seed planted.

National Tees Forward Day: Architect Tom Doak has actually begun serious discussions on GolfClubAtlas.com about the idea of courses around the world — in conjunction with some sort of informational campaign — moving

A Little Bit of Holiday Fantasy

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



HERE'S TO NO
SCORECARDS, NO
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MOVING TEES
FORWARD AND ...
YEAH, RIGHT

their tees up for a day to give golfers a fresh look and new perspective. And this is not just geared toward men who shouldn't be playing the back tees, but also for those courses that still have not adjusted their forward tees to more accurately reflect the play of those who use them. (Yes, this means moving forward tees up to fairways in some cases).

National Tees Forward Day would introduce different shots and ask golfers fresh questions, something that theoretically will liven up their golf experiences. Oh, and probably speed up play.

Come to think of it, let's make this a week-long holiday from the one-foot-in-the-rough mentality that is so mysteriously deemed necessary to protect the integrity of the game. But that might also require some sort of USGA endorsement because slope will not be accurately reflected. There goes another subcommittee.

National No Bunker Raking Week: Bunkers will be raked, just not by anyone on the maintenance staff. This week, the raking is up to the golfers.

Let them see how bad their fellow players are at raking. However, with the burden on themselves, it's likely that golfers will rake bunkers with more care. The hope here is to show that daily raking is an excessive and unnecessary expense, and it also would return a little more uncertainty to those hazards that are all too often expected to provide a certain lie.

It would be nice if this were done in conjunction with a PGA Tour event where raking ends the Sunday before a tournament begins and is then left up to the players. I know, more fantasy.

But who says you can't initiate these holidays at your own course?

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