

How Managers Are Bearing Up

A GOLFDOM survey of managers nationwide shows most are standing above the deluge of problems posed by energy shortages, although some are on tip-toe. Here are tips managers suggest for weathering the "energy crisis"

by STEPHEN W. BYERS

Of club managers responding to GOLFDOM's country-wide, random survey on the impact of the now highly controversial "energy crisis," 85 per cent reported no significant debilitation in their club operation that could be attributed to fuel price increases and shortages. That 15 per cent of the respondents bitterly complained of green fee revenue virtually drying up, construction bottlenecked by inadequate material availability and half deliveries of essential dining room supplies, such as linen, food and liquor, indicates that the shortages have not had a graduated effect. It's "no problem" or "a disaster."

FAT IN THE CITY, OR THE
PROVINCIAL BLUES

The embattled 15 per cent were invar-

ably managers of clubs unfortunately located in remote areas not surrounded by condominiums or other housing developments with memberships sparsely scattered over large areas and resorts positioned outside normal public transportation routes.

"We're not only out of the way for easy access to public transport, but our members live over a 30 mile radius from the club," reports one Floridian resort manager, "and there don't seem to be any areas comprising enough member residences to make car pooling a feasible alternative to not playing golf here."

Managers of clubs isolated from their purveyors suffered the most from spotty deliveries of essential supplies. An exasperated D. Fletcher, manager of the Birmingham CC in Alabama, is

still smarting from an interminable wait on linen delivery; when the order finally arrived it was only half of his request. He added that all his suppliers were cutting back on delivery frequency.

HOW TO COPE IF THE CRUNCH
GETS CRUNCHIER

Although most club managers seem skeptical of the far-reaching detrimental effects of the "energy crunch" predicted by Government officials, most are either already implementing conservation measures (particularly those rudimentary ones suggested by the Government) and revenue promotion plans or have such procedures under advisement in their club planning committees.

What follows is a distillation of the

continued

MANAGERS *continued*

best tips offered by managers for solving current and anticipated energy related problems:

- **Cement relations with suppliers.** Try to get a commitment from them that will assure you a high delivery priority. Offer to pay them on delivery instead of waiting for a bill, at least until the gas "crunch" subsides. Bob Stanley, manager of the Mill River CC on Long Island, has not noticed much fluctuation in club revenue or suffered from supply deficiencies. "I've dealt with the same suppliers for many years and they've assured me a high delivery priority regardless of what happens," he says. Stanley also stated that his membership is not rooted in luxury and that the small sacrifices thus far asked of them have not been disturbing.
- **Ask purveyors to keep you informed of their continuing projections on delivery capacity.** This helps avoid the possibility of being left with no alternatives because you had no lead time knowledge of delivery cutbacks. A Delray Beach, Florida, club manager stated that because he was forewarned by his purveyors of cuts in delivery frequency, he was able to double his order for each delivery and obviate any supply shortage. "The only items, I've found in short supply," he says, "were beans and toilet paper."
- **All clubs should turn down their thermostats to 68 degrees and the air conditioners to half power, as Government officials have requested.** Informed members know already that the slightly lower temperature is healthier. "When I get complaints about the cooler club rooms," says a Virginia country club manager, "I refer them to any of several fellow members who are doctors to explain to them the therapeutic value of living in 68 degree atmosphere versus 72."
- **Close off rooms that get infrequent use.** Most managers told GOLFDOM that at least 25 per cent of their available floor space was not used. One midwestern manager says he cut heating oil consumption by 30 per cent in January by closing the large doors separating the dining room from the 10,000-square-foot comprising the club's recreation lounge. He then cut the heat in this large area to 60 degrees. "People use the lounge as much as ever," he says. "They rally around the fireplace, roasting marshmallows and hot dogs supplied by the dining

room." He also advocates closing doors leading to long hallways and cutting heat from hall vents.

A midwestern club administrator says, "Even after closing off the ladies' card room, I still find it half full of besweated bridge enthusiasts two or three days a week." Another manager noted that heat from the large pizza oven (pizza is a dining room specialty there) and from another large stove permitted the closing of heat vents in the kitchen five hours a day.

- **Use electric light bulbs with lower wattages.** Many managers stated they have reduced over-all light bulb wattage by 50 per cent.
- **Meet with employees and alert them of your interest in any energy saving ideas.** Instruct them to watchdog any unnecessary use of electricity.
- **Keep your membership abreast of your current and expected energy problems.** Appraise them of steps you plan to take before you take them to avoid time consuming piecemeal complaints. It is important to explain how your conservation plans will help. Most members will want to do their part even if it means a small reduction in club comforts and services when they see how much difference their small sacrifices can make.

"My members do not feel any hardship in turning on club lights when they need them and turning them off when they've finished," says a Long Island club manager, "most of them are used to the procedure from doing it at home."

A North Carolina club manager confessed that many of the good ideas for energy conservation had come from astute observations from members at weekly sessions devoted to the threatened energy problem. "Some of my members are in the oil business one way or another and offered to guarantee any short term shortages we might suffer in the next crucial months," he says.

- **Check with universities and newspapers to find local energy experts who might be available to speak at your club.** His suggestions could help the club through the "crunch" and his observations could be highly informative in general.
- **Prepare your members for a slightly less manicured golf course due to less watering and grass cutting.** If you are in the process of becoming more heavily automated hold off until the end of the "crunch" is in sight.

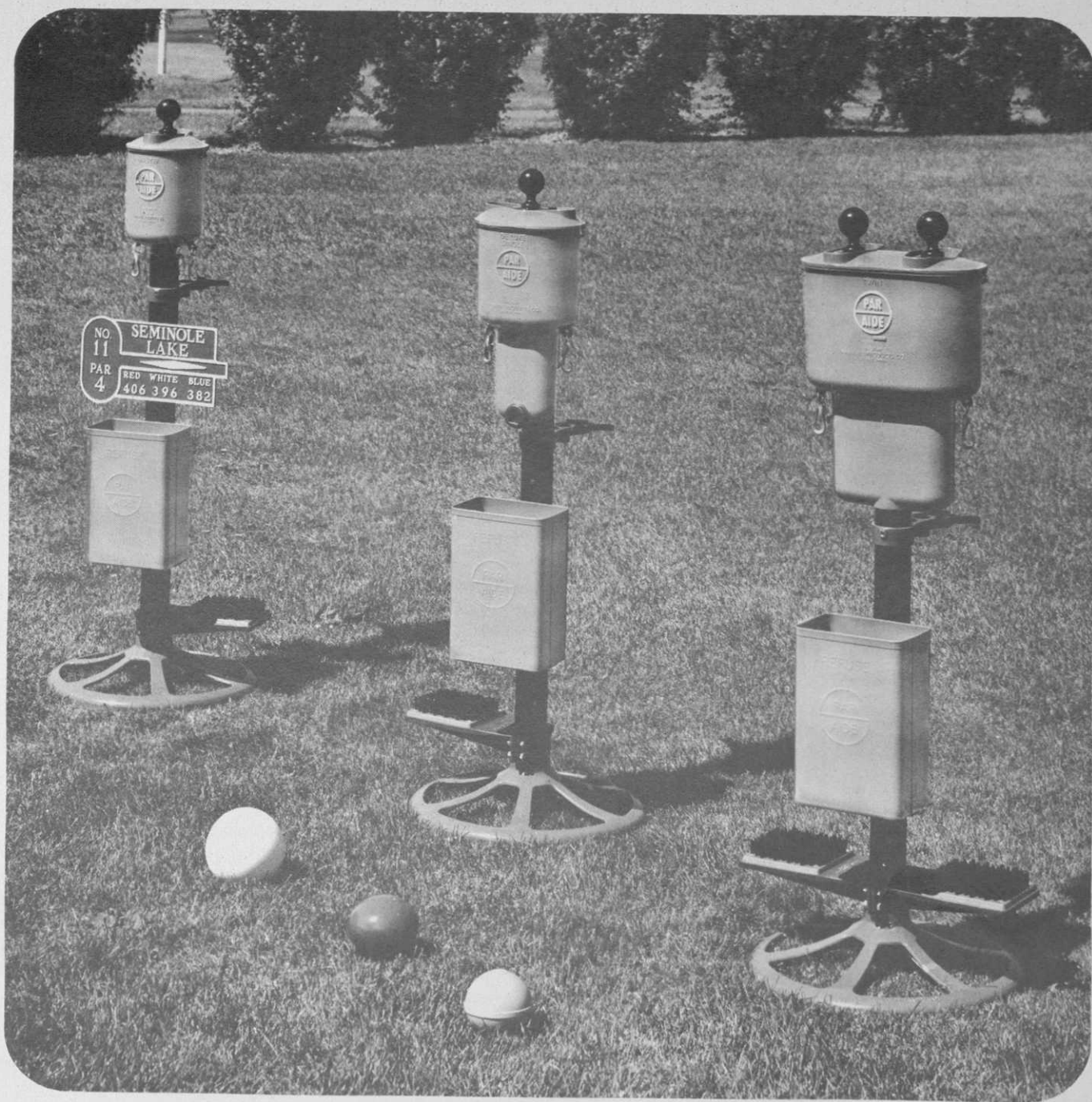
● **Some gasoline-strapped clubs with both electric- and gas-powered golf cars report that they are offering the electric cars for use first.** "Four days a week only half my fleet is in use," says a Florida resort manager, "and most of those are electric cars. Of course we use our gas cars if we need them, but we try to put out the electric units first."

● **Cut the use of ornamental lights.** Eileen Goodman, manager of Coral Ridge CC in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, admits to no significant problems directly associated with the energy crisis, because club members primarily live within walking distance of the club and because the gas shortage has curtailed member vacation travel. Even so, she says they have taken the standard precautions recommended by the Government in addition to shutting down their 27 high-wattage floodlights that formerly highlighted their scenic royal palms along the drive leading to the clubhouse.

● **Managers should aid in the formation of car pools and should investigate the possibility of minibus rentals to service the club exclusively.** F. Holzheimer, manager of the Fort Lauderdale G & CC, says his members have already started several motor pools in areas where 10 or 15 members live in proximity. Two Florida clubs recently purchased a minibus (seating 15) to service a 20 mile radius of both clubs. "If the energy crisis lasts just one year, the bus and driver expense will have paid off many times over," says one manager offering the service. He refused comment on the cost of the bus and driver's salary for one year.

● **Clubs maintaining swimming pools should prepare members for a discontinuance or a cut-back in pool use, unless CBS sources are overly pessimistic on predicted chlorine shortages.** The station announced January 28 that chlorine for public water purification was in short supply and that unless an affective way to step up chlorine production was found by next month, chlorine allocations for uses other than for municipal water purification would be severely limited until shortages were compensated.

● **Current club plans for large scale construction should be re-evaluated to reflect the predicted dearth of certain building materials containing such components as plastics and certain**



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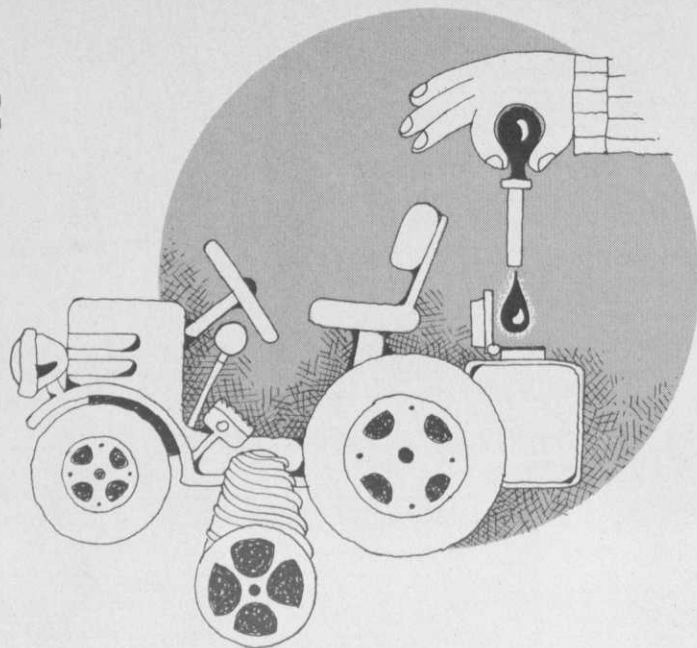


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Quality Turf on Less Fuel

Superintendents could be faced with the seemingly conflicting tasks of keeping the course in top condition and implementing a fuel conservation program. Here's one expert's tips to help reconcile the problem



by HERBERT COLWILL

Engineering Manager, Turf Products Group, The Toro Company, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Fuel costs now represent only 2 to 3 per cent of the total maintenance budget at most golf courses. Dwindling fuel supplies and rising fuel prices, however, will increase that percentage, although to what extent remains impossible to predict. A survey by The Toro Company in January of representative golf course superintendents throughout the country reveals that superintendents have experienced cutbacks in fuel supplies, ranging from 10 up to 25 per cent. Provided supplies remain at those levels, they foresee no problems in continuing to provide their memberships with the same high level of maintenance as in the past.

However, were the Government to institute stringent gasoline rationing, the percentage of cutbacks of fuel to superintendents would be that much higher and would force superintendents to take emergency steps, such as reducing maintenance in rough areas or revising the schedules of watering, fertilizing and mowing.

Although no such action is mandatory now, superintendents should be forewarned of the possibility of rationing and have already on hand plans for revisions of current maintenance schedules.

Dwindling gas supplies do not necessarily threaten the existence of golf courses. In all probability courses will become more vital to the well-being of a community. As vacation travel is restricted, it is reasonable

that the desire for and the demand on local recreational facilities, such as golf courses, will increase. To provide the kind of turfgrass environment that will withstand this greater traffic, the golf course superintendent must continue his full management program, not reduce it.

The dilemma this poses for the superintendent is one of reducing gasoline consumption yet maintaining the quality of turf that his players have learned to expect and appreciate. How a superintendent achieves the goal involves many steps, the primary ones are the proper equipment for each job, optimizing maintenance of all equipment and good management of resources.

SELECTING THE PROPER EQUIPMENT

As a general rule, reel mowers and sickle bar mowers are more efficient than rotary and flair mowers. The scissor action of reel and sickle bar mowers shears the grass rather than the impact cutting from rotary and flair mowers. The scissor action requires less power. One 70-inch reel mower, such as Toro's Pro, is capable of cutting a 70-inch swath of grass using a 6.25hp engine, whereas one rotary mower (the Trojan) with a 60-inch width of cut needs a 14hp engine. The 70-inch reel mower cannot be used for all trimming operations, but it should be used wherever possible.

With the same mowing speed, reel mowers will use up to 50 per cent less fuel per acre of cut grass than rotary mowers.

The diesel engine, although more expensive, is 20 to 25 per cent more efficient than the gasoline engine. As a rule, diesel fuel costs less than gasoline. Preliminary tests on the Toro Parkmaster, for example, indicate that 400 to 600 hours of use a year are required to justify the additional cost of a diesel engine, based on fuel saving. But with gasoline on allocation, the cost may not be the primary factor in deciding when to use diesel power. Perhaps the 20 to 25 per cent greater efficiency offered by diesel power, which means fewer gallons for a given task, will give the superintendent enough incentive to consider diesel power when purchasing new equipment or to use diesel-powered equipment for a greater number of jobs, if it is already being used on the golf course. Another advantage of diesel fuel, frequently overlooked, is that it is not as likely, as gasoline is, to be stolen.

It is more efficient to use one large mower than it is to use two or more smaller mowers. One Greensmaster 3 rider, for instance, can cover a given area in the same time as three to four walk Greensmowers. Using a nine-gang fairway mower will increase mowing capacity by 20 per cent over a seven-unit machine, while the dif-

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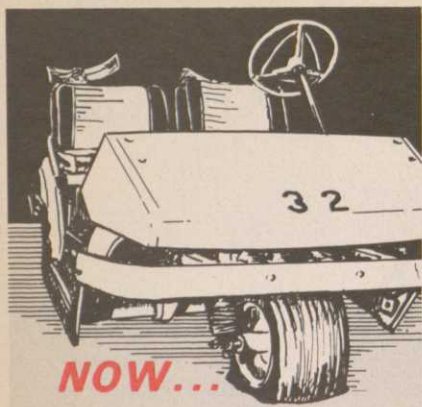
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QUALITY TURF *from page 54*

ference in fuel consumption is only 5 to 10 per cent.

A useful general rule: The larger the equipment and the faster the job can be done, the less fuel will be used.

Among the many factors that affect the quality of cut of a reel mower is the number of blades in the reel. A five-bladed reel uses 8 to 12 per cent less power and fuel than a six-bladed one. Determining the quality of cut for a given area is a judgement only the superintendent can make, after running comparison tests. He can then decide if he can take advantage of the fuel-saving opportunity by using fewer blades on the reels.

OPTIMIZING MAINTENANCE

The engine is probably the most critical component in determining fuel economy. A properly maintained, well-tuned engine can conserve fuel. Because of the variety of engines available, the superintendent should refer to the engine manual for each machine. These are some of the items that will bring about fuel savings: **Carburetor adjustment.** Both the no-load idle and high-speed carburetor jets, if adjustable, should be set for the maximum air-to-fuel ratio or lean setting. Adjust to a lean mixture until some misfiring occurs or the engine runs rough, then enrich the mixture slightly. Check also the acceleration to ensure performance when under load. **Ignition system.** Replace or clean the points, condenser and spark plugs, according to the engine manufacturer's recommendation. Check timing of the engine to ensure maximum power.

Air cleaner. This component is extremely important for durability of the engine; a clogged air cleaner can change the air-to-fuel ratio and use excessive amounts of fuel.

Oil-fuel ratio (two cycle). This ratio varies for different engines, so follow the engine manufacturer's recommendation for mixture.

Combustion chamber. According to some air-cooled engine makers, it is necessary to remove the cylinder head and clean the deposits from the combustion chamber. When this job is done, also check the valves to ensure the valve and seat surfaces are in good condition. Recondition worn engines to improve compression by grinding the valves and replacing the old rings.

General maintenance of the machine can also prolong its life and save fuel. It is important to reduce the parasitic load caused by the various components. Check bearings, belts, chains and shafts for proper alignment. Make the necessary adjustments to bring these components into proper alignment. This will reduce friction within the machine and allow more of the available power for work output. Frequent and proper lubrication also can reduce friction and parasitic load.

Proper adjustments can be an important fuel-saving technique. Belts that slip excessively are inefficient and will waste fuel. Chains should run smoothly with proper adjustment and lubrication. Keeping tires at recommended pressure can reduce the rolling resistance of the machine.

With reel mowers, the bedknife adjustment is critical. Overtightening wastes power, and an insufficient bedknife contact will not maintain the slight wear essential to maintaining sharp edges. Occasional backlapping may be necessary to maintain sharp edges. A sharp reel mower will improve the quality of cut, which could prolong the interval of mowing in some areas. A sharp, properly adjusted mower will require less power and therefore use less fuel.

Sharp cutting edges on rotary mower blades will improve the quality of cut and reduce power requirements. Sharp edges also will allow reduction of engine RPM while maintaining good quality of cut. Keep the blade edges parallel to the ground. Discharge material away from uncut grass and thereby avoid picking up the clippings on the next pass and recirculating them. Control the discharge opening for optimum discharge, but be careful to maintain the necessary safety features built into the deck. Saving fuel at the expense of safety is not wise.

MANAGEMENT

The superintendent also controls other factors that could save on fuel consumption. Plan mowing patterns for the least amount of transport between locations. Use the least amount of overlap consistent with the skills of the operators. Select the heights of cut best suited for each area to be mowed. You may be able to increase the height of cut in the roughs and add one or two days to your mowing cycle,

continued on page 74

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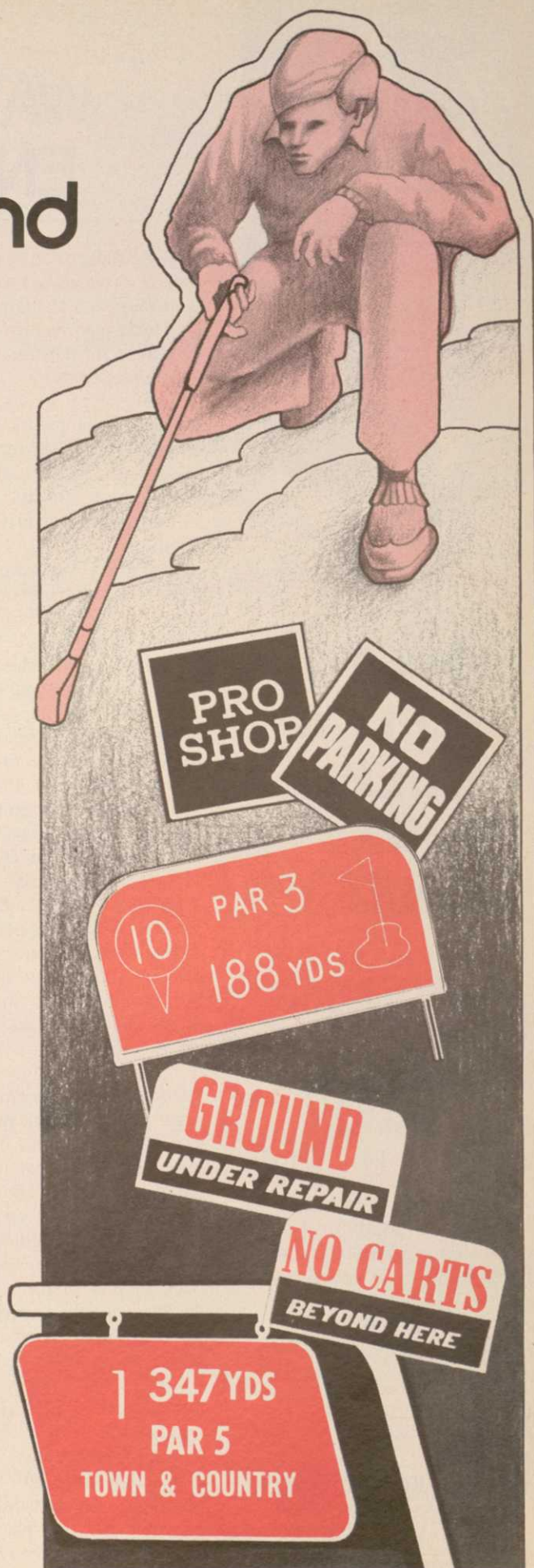
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WATSON ON THE ENERGY CRISIS

The following are highlights from a speech given to the 44th Annual Michigan Turfgrass Conference, which was held in January in East Lansing, Mich., by James R. Watson, vice president, The Toro Company.

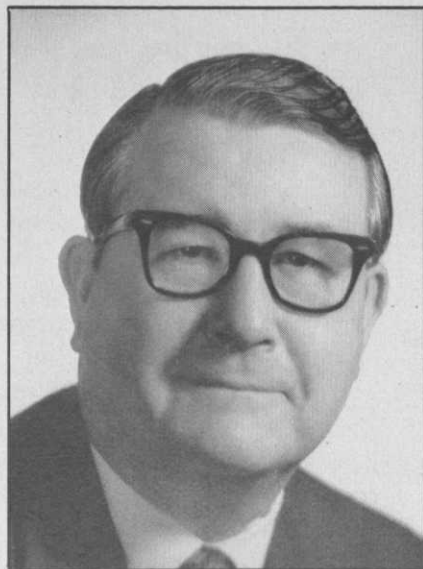
The energy crisis, according to Watson, does not now threaten golf courses and other recreational facilities; it can be a "real opportunity to provide more service than ever before to the members and users of all turf facilities."

Watson's most important bit of advice to golf course superintendents about the energy crisis and its implications is "stay cool." Superintendents should assess the short-term implications of the crisis and deal with them. This will provide a base for the preparation and development of solutions for long-range problems.

A Toro Market Planning Department survey of superintendents whose courses range from Washington to Florida confirmed that golf course superintendents are excellent planners. They plan their operational programs, develop alternative plans in the event of budget curtailment, carefully weigh all conditions, and then choose the best program for their particular operation. The turfgrass manager must know how much it costs to grow and to maintain his turfgrass facility at the level desired by his club or controlling organization. He must know what his expenditures produce in terms of lower operating costs, and he must be prepared to defend his budget.

Fuel costs make up only 2 or 3 per cent of the total golf course budget. Even in those instances where the cut-back in fuel supplies was as high as 25 per cent, the superintendents foresaw few major problems in continuing a high level of maintenance.

Unless the country resorts to fuel rationing, these men saw no reason for major modification of their normal operating procedures. They recognize that maintenance will be more important than ever—not only to ensure the best possible playing conditions, but also to protect the heavy investment in



property values that members have made.

INCREASED PLAY

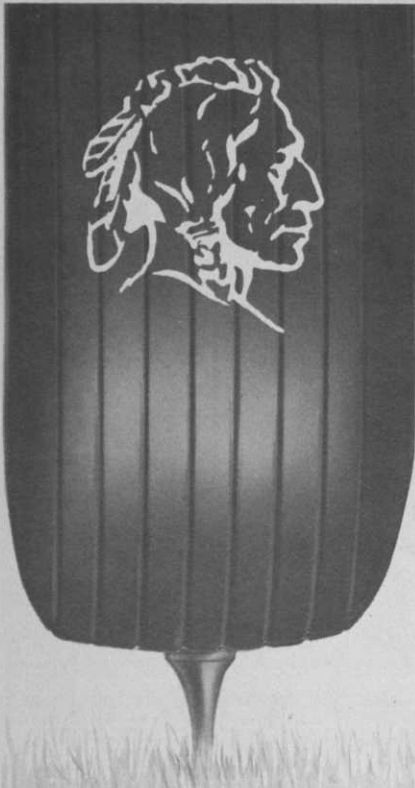
The one certainty to look for from the energy crisis is an increase in play on local courses. Recreational travel—whether by car or plane—has already been affected. Flight schedules have been cut back, and those planes that do take off are almost fully loaded. Few automobile drivers want to take an extended trip that includes the risk of being stranded *en route*. This means that the parks and the golf courses closer to home will get the brunt of the recreational traffic. Heavier play will put greater stress on fairways and greens. This can only be countered with good maintenance practices and careful planning.

The superintendent must examine the performance of his equipment, his operating procedures and his maintenance programs to ensure efficiency at all levels. But fuel costs and prices, at this juncture, do not appear to constitute a serious enough problem to call for ingenious solutions to the energy crisis. A straightforward, simple approach seems to be all that is called for.

EFFECTS OF THE ENERGY CRISIS

A Pennsylvania superintendent said his fuel supplies have been cut back 25 per cent since last September. A Florida

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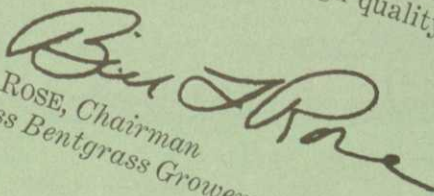
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**PENNCROSS
BENT GRASS**

Watson from page 58

superintendent, who operates close to 150 pieces of gas-powered equipment, has had his supplies cut 15 per cent. Neither man anticipates having any maintenance problems.

But if supplies should be cut further or rationing instituted, most superintendents said they would reduce the maintenance of roughs and try to continue the normal operations on tees, greens and fairways. Should the situation tighten even further, they would consider altering the mowing frequencies and fertilizer applications on fairways and roughs and look for alternative power sources.

Higher fuel costs would send them looking for equipment that gets the job done with fewer men—laborsaving, multipurpose equipment, possibly diesel-powered.

The deep conviction of golf course superintendents that highly mechanized equipment is the most effective way to reduce labor costs has even begun to affect golf course architects, who rarely considered maintenance equipment needs a few years ago. Today, on a number of courses, traps

are placed farther away from greens than they used to be in order to accommodate fringe trimmers. There are fewer "fingers" in the traps, so that sand raking machines can operate more efficiently. Other signs of the architects' new awareness of maintenance needs are gentle slopes on and away from tees and large aprons on the greens.

LABOR COSTS OUTWEIGH FUEL COSTS. Over the last several years, the most rapidly rising cost factor on the golf course has been labor. In 1972 alone, this cost component rose 12 per cent. Any increase in fuel costs makes it more important to reduce labor costs through the use of sophisticated, labor-saving equipment.

The following five steps will help superintendents conserve fuel while ensuring quality turf.

Select the most efficient piece of equipment for each job.

Cut down the number of blades in a reel.

Use diesel fuel.

Use clean, properly adjusted equipment.

Change mowing practices.

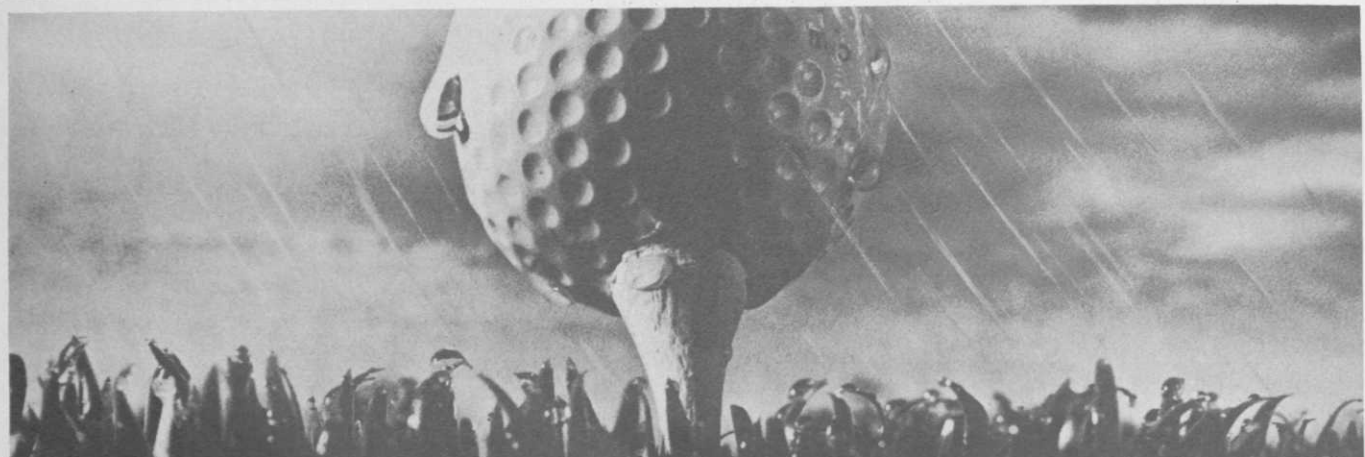
INCREASE IN OIL BY 1980

The very reputable British magazine, *The Economist*, predicted that the world will have an oil glut by 1980, triggered by the current crisis. The oil-consuming nations have all instituted methods—mandatory or voluntary—to save on fuel and to search out new oil supplies and other sources of energy. As a result *The Economist* stated that there will again be more than enough oil to drive down prices.

Whether we reach a state of an over-abundance of oil or not, it is very clear that we can no longer afford to waste the resources that the land has given us in such bountiful measure. It has been a rude shock for many Americans who have always been told, "nothing is impossible," to discover that there *are* limitations.

A look at Europe, where expensive fuel has been a fact of life for a long time, should help us cope with the shortages that now confront us. Although the development of golf courses on the Continent has lagged far behind ours, the Europeans have a more

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