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# Looking at golf cars from the golf course operator's point of view

By Joe Much, NGF Regional Director

Probably no single source of revenue has increased so dramatically for golf facilities in the past decade as that from power golf cars. At many clubs and courses golf car income has become a vital part of the budget, often ranking as high as third behind membership dues or green fees and the food/beverage operation. Some facilities even list golf cars as the first or second best income producer.

Every bit as important as the financial return realized from the operation of golf cars is the fact that they have made golf possible for thousands of golfers whose physical infirmities ordinarily would prohibit their participation. For others, cars have made the game quicker and more enjoyable.

Ten years ago there were approximately 150,000 cars in use and manufacturers were shipping about 12,000 a year at a value of about \$20 million. Today, there are over 500,000 in use,

annual production approached 65,000 cars valued at nearly \$100 million and golf car rentals bring in over \$475 million a year to the operators of golf courses.

Golf car fleets ranging up to 100 or more units are fixtures at virtually every golf resort in the world and most private clubs. Operators of daily fee and municipal facilities have learned that an increasing percentage of public course golfers are riding.

A wide variety of cars, both electric and gasoline powered, enables clubs and course operators to secure models that meet their particular needs. Terrain, climate and membership or clientele characteristics should dictate choice. For instance, the ideal car for a sandy, flat seaside course in the Southeast may be unsuitable for a hilly, wet course in the Pacific Northwest. A hilly or mountainside course obviously demands a golf car with a

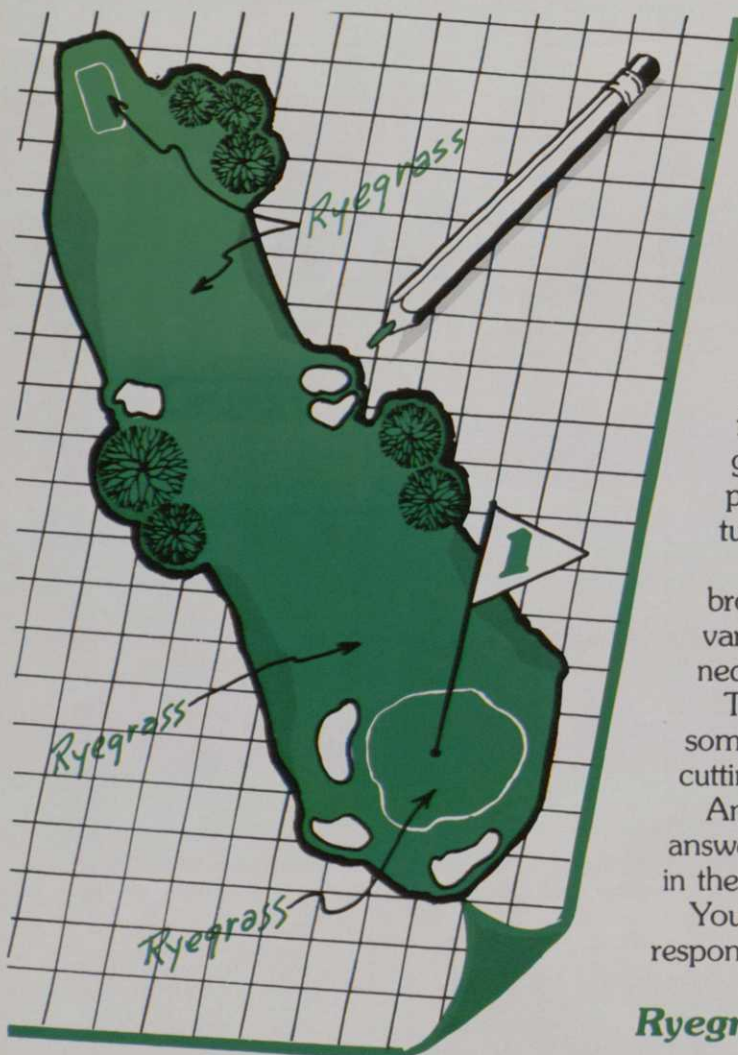
durable power plant. The same type of course may require a wide wheelbase with a low center of gravity for additional stability.

Manufacturers' suggested prices for golf cars in 1980 ranged from \$2,077 to nearly \$4,000 according to a survey conducted by *Club Management Magazine*. Happily for golf clubs, the same competition that produced a diversity of product choices also produced a diversity of financing methods. Distributors offer a wide choice of options for either purchase or lease of golf cars.

Clubs or course operators considering the acquisition of a golf car fleet must consider several key factors:

1. Financing method — purchase or lease.
2. Product choice (electric or gasoline, three-wheel or four-wheel, steering wheel or tiller, options,

*Continues on page 19*



## Ryegrass Now Has an Added Dimension

Emergence of the highly successful, exceptionally handsome turf-type perennial ryegrasses lends further credence to the age-old claim that "ryegrass is the world's most widely used grass."

For years both regular annual and perennial ryegrass have found a ready home where there is need for a fast-germinating grass to quickly form a strong root system and provide a durable, handsome, inexpensive, easy-to-maintain turf.

The finer-bladed proprietary varieties have further broadened the realm of ryegrass. Now you'll find the turf-type varieties on every greenway where the finest possible turf is a necessity.

They have proven themselves on greens, tees and fairways of some of the world's finest golf courses, thriving at standard cutting heights as well as when close-cut for a putting surface.

And both the public and proprietary varieties are the perfect answer for the winter seeding of golf course greens and fairways in the Southern U.S.

You can count on ryegrass to germinate in a week or less, respond rapidly to fertilization and never require pampering.

**Ryegrass . . . it's truly the all-around performer.**

Oregon Ryegrass Commission - Salem, Oregon

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## An untold story of compatibility

Turf managers know that Penncross and Emerald—the world's two great bentgrasses—are sterling solo performers, but a handful of canny Superintendents have discovered something new about this outstanding pair.

They've found that Emerald and Penncross make one masterful mix for the re-seeding of old, established golf greens.

HERE'S WHAT THREE SUPERINTENDENTS HAVE TO SAY

*"I've been overseeding my greens with a mixture of Emerald and Penncross*

*because the durability and wear-resistance is outstanding, and the putting surface texture is exceptionally smooth. I also like the savings that result from mixing the two."*

Dave Jones, Supt., San Diego Country Club, Chula Vista, California

*"Emerald and Penncross are unusually compatible and disease-resistant. In combination they wear well and make very good recovery from injury. Combining them helps me keep costs at a realistic level."*

Dave Mastroleo, Supt., Hillcrest Country Club, Los Angeles, California

*"I have a three-year old nursery of*

*Emerald bent that is maintained exclusively to repair damage to my Penncross greens. It's a perfect solution because the texture and color of Penncross and Emerald are remarkably similar."*

A. B. Munez, Supt., Southhills Country Club, West Covina, California

P.S. Emerald is also an ideal choice for both tees and fairways. It will provide your golfers a nice, tight lie and does a fine job of healing scars.

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**“Why am I  
so strong on service?  
Because Jacobsen customers  
say they expect it.”**



When you buy a piece of turf equipment from your Jacobsen distributor, he knows that the sale doesn't end with delivery.

In fact, it's just beginning. The rest of it depends upon his ability to give you fast service whenever it's needed. He knows that when your equipment is out for service, it's like having no equipment at all.

That's why your Jacobsen distributor goes out of his way to offer you the best service in the business. From normal maintenance to emergency repairs.

And he's been going out of his way for a long time. Our distributors have been with us for an average of 25 years. And their service managers have been with them for an average of 11 years. That's one heck of a lot of experience.

But Jacobsen distributors don't rest on laurels. Every year they send their service managers and key people to our Racine Product Training Center for comprehensive training sessions.

To stay up-to-date on new products and modifications.

To attend workshops on subjects such as the latest advances in hydraulics and transmissions. And to attend seminars on parts, service and management training.

Not only that, Jacobsen distributors hold field seminars and offer training to those customers who handle their own routine maintenance.

Fast service. Done by professionals who are thoroughly trained.

That's what you said you expect.

And that's why we feel that the sale is really completed in the service department.

Next time you get a chance, ask your Jacobsen distributor to tell you about his service philosophy.

The more you listen to what he has to say, the more you'll know he's been listening to you.

# We hear you.

**JACOBSEN**  
**TEXTRON**

Jacobsen Division of Textron Inc.

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# Legend...

## A New Name

## A New Idea

Legend — the newest name in golf cars.

Reaction Injection Molded Urethane — the newest idea for extra-strength automotive bodies. Only the Legend golf car has it.

RIM Urethane sets a new standard for rustproof, corrosion free durability in a golf car body. It resists scrapes and deflects most impact without damage to stay beautiful for years. It's the Legend body — the important reason you should have Legend on your course.

Discover for yourself the complete Legend performance and easy maintenance story. Legend — the golf car that's built tough to last!

Three-wheel and four-wheel cars available. For all the details, write or call.

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# LEGEND

## GOLF CARS

# ACTI-DIONE®

## STILL YOUR FIRST CHOICE FOR A TURF DISEASE CONTROL PROGRAM.

### NO. 1 FUNGICIDE CHOICE

Acti-dione has an established record of performance on greens and fairways. In continuous use for more than 20 years, Acti-dione has earned an untarnished reputation for reliability. Widely respected for its broad spectrum activity, Acti-dione is a leading choice as a pivotal fungicide in a total disease management program.

### COSTS LESS, TOO

Acti-dione is the most economical fairway fungicide program available today and equally accepted for use on tees and greens.

### WORKS ON CONTACT

Acti-dione, a contact fungicide, eradicates as well as prevents many turf diseases. Regular application protects greens and fairways year-round.



# TUCO

Division of The Upjohn Company

### NO DISEASE RESISTANCE BUILDUP

Acti-dione continues to work effectively, with no reported evidence of resistance buildup. It degrades quickly and is environmentally sound.

### NON-CONTRIBUTOR TO THATCH BUILDUP

Acti-dione ingredients do not interfere with beneficial bacteria necessary for thatch breakdown.

### WATER-SOLUBLE

Acti-dione is easy to mix and keep in suspension, gives uniform coverage, and is compatible with most commonly used fungicides and insecticides.

### PROXOL® FROM TUCO CONTROLS GRUBS

Proxol 80 SP insecticide wipes out grub problems along with sod webworms, cutworms and armyworms.

The New 1810...

# Ditch Witch meets you halfway.

Looking for a trencher that's a bit more than a handlebar machine, but not quite as much as our 2200 riding unit? Now you can stop searching...the Ditch Witch 1810 meets you halfway.



This little 18-HP-class trencher has a unique design which locks all four wheels into equal drive at the push of a pedal. Ground drive is hydrostatic... same as our big R100 model. A pedal-engaged master clutch permits quick cold-engine starts and will disengage all functions.

The 1810's all-in-one, single gear box design houses the differential, hydraulic pump drive and transmission. It's also the hydraulic reservoir... a one-location time saver when it comes to routine hydraulic checks and regular maintenance.

Pre-set and self-adjusting belt tension, speed feathering control, hefty 20,000-pound-test digging chain... all these features and more. And in a cost versus payback challenge, the 1810 offers the labor and time-saving returns of many larger, higher-priced machines.

Contact your Ditch Witch dealer for a free demonstration. Call Toll Free (800) 654-6481 or write for more details.

Sounds like a big little trencher...  
tell me more!

8-80/GB

Check one or both:

- Please send me information on the 1810.
- Arrange for a free, no-obligation demonstration.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
A/C: \_\_\_\_\_


City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

CLIP AND MAIL TO:

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**DITCH WITCH IS THE ANSWER!**

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**Golf cars** from page 12

etc).

3. Financial stability and reputation of manufacturer and servicing dealer.
4. Storage and repair facilities.
5. Who will administer the fleet operation?
6. Who will service the fleet?

Look over the chart above right. It's a very helpful guide to the economics of an electric golf car.

It should be noted that the labor cost of service and administration is not entered in this exercise. Most distributors suggest that a fleet as small as 20 cars does not require a full-time maintenance employee. They recommend that care and repair of the cars be added to the responsibility of the mechanic who functions in the golf course maintenance department, thus eliminating added labor expense. Administration of the rental procedure and the responsibility for making the cars customer-ready will normally be performed by the golf professional or his staff, who will receive a predetermined fee or percentage for that service. A fee of \$1 per round or 10% of rental fee is an average.

In sum, a 20-car golf car fleet rolling through a total of 3,500 rounds of golf annually at \$12 per rental should return at least \$20,000 profit.

If this same fleet of 20 cars were leased, the net return to the club would depend upon the terms of the contract with the dealer. At 40% to the lessee, the gross profit could be as much as \$850 per car and the net something less depending upon the arrangement with the professional or course manager who administers rentals.

In some cases of leased cars the club might also be required to share in the cost of maintenance.

(Next month in Part II of our article we will cover Financing Fleet Acquisition.)

**Economics of an electric golf car**

(Four-Year Cycle)

Purchase price: (including batteries)	\$2,500
Depreciation per year*	\$500
Maintenance/refurbishing per year	150
Battery replacement per year**	120
Insurance per year	35
Taxes per year	10
Electricity per year	90
Expenses***	\$905
Gross income (based on 175 rounds per year and a charge of \$12 a round)	\$2,100
Less expenses	905
Net annual income	\$1,195

\*Based on a straight-line depreciation of \$2,000 (\$500 a year), with a \$500 residual.

\*\*Based on an average battery life of 16 months. This means a set of six batteries, at a total cost of \$240, is replaced twice during the four-year cycle.

\*\*\*Does not include interest payment on capital investment, if applicable, or general overhead for paperwork, drivers to and from shed, etc. Cost of storage area, recharging equipment, tools, etc., also not figured.

**To Lease:**

If you lease the cars, eliminate all of the above expenses except electricity (\$90). This would result in a net income of \$2,010 per car. Under a standard 50/50 lease arrangement, the club's net income would be \$1,005 per car.

# There just isn't another sod cutter built like Ryan's.

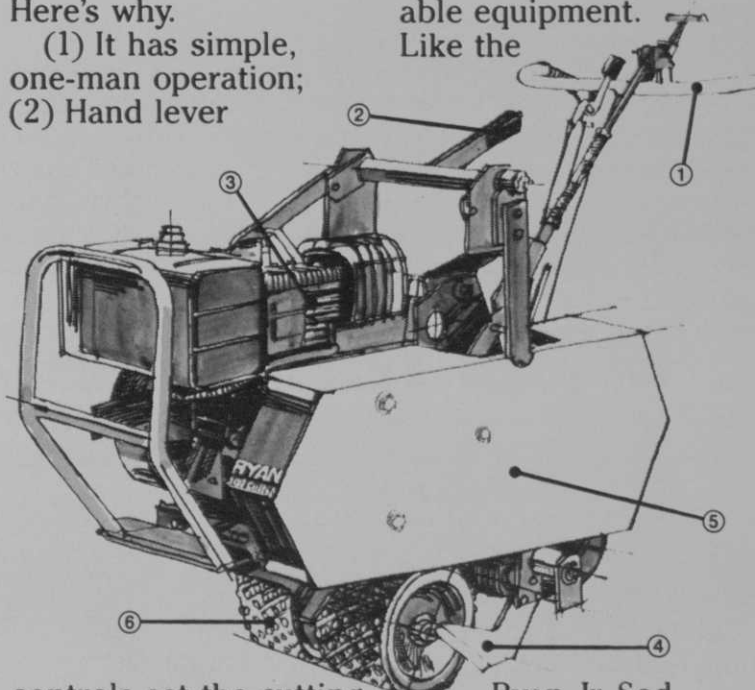
This is the Ryan® Jr. Sod Cutter. The latest in a line that started 24 years ago. Naturally, we've made quite a few improvements since then, but today's Jr. Sod Cutter delivers the same, everyday dependability and reliable performance that made our first model so popular. Here's why.

- (1) It has simple, one-man operation;
- (2) Hand lever

heavy-duty gear box is built to last year after year; (6) Self-propelled action lets you cut up to 135 feet of sod per minute.

With operating costs getting higher all the time, you need to get the most out of every hour's wage you pay. That takes a dependable crew, using dependable equipment.

Like the



controls set the cutting depth up to 2½"; (3) A rugged 7-hp engine delivers plenty of power; (4) You can choose 12" or 18" width models; (5) Its

Ryan Jr. Sod Cutter.

Ask your Ryan dealer for a demonstration, and see for yourself how we build a sod cutter.

80-CUR-5



## The Jr. Sod Cutter

**RYAN®**  
TURF-CARE  
EQUIPMENT

Day-In, Day-Out  
Performance.

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# Maintenance training bridges equipment knowledge gap

*Golf course management enters a decade in which success will perhaps depend as never before on managers' knowledge of turf care equipment operation and maintenance. This article looks at a new program which could signal a significant approach in maintenance/operation training and favorably impact upon golf management in the years ahead.*

Inflation, trimmed operating budgets and the need for energy conservation accompany the golfing industry into the 80's — a decade that will require new levels of end-user proficiency in turf care equipment, operation and maintenance.

One of the ironies of technological advancement is that while this produces generations of more versatile machines, it also widens the end-user's knowledge gap in regard to how to best utilize and properly maintain them. In short, technology outpaces education in equipment care. Another

factor contributing to the situation has been the priority traditionally given in college programs to turf care and growth. Turf managers were expected to have only a cursory acquaintance with the mechanical end of their business. Times have changed.

## On-Campus Program

Bridging the knowledge gap in equipment now on the market will be a major challenge facing the golf industry and manufacturers in the '80's.

An innovative response to the challenge took the form of the special turf care equipment training program held in June in Lake City, Florida by Jacobsen Division of Textron, Inc. Here, in conjunction with the Lake City Community College School of Golf Course Operations, the company provided its first ever on-campus training program.

Participating in the special program were golf course superintendents and mechanics from southeastern states,

plus the college's golf management students. Also taking part in the event were area distributors of Jacobsen turf equipment. The program focused on present day equipment operation and maintenance.

According to program developer, Ralph Sylvester, Jacobsen's manager of product training, "Equipment basics have changed markedly in a relatively short span of time. Notably, about 85 per cent of today's turf care equipment features one or more hydraulic systems which have replaced manual systems. As found in most equipment, hydraulics have given golf course superintendents and mechanics better control over cutting operations and projects. Unjustifiably, they have also often become the whipping boy in many equipment malfunction cases.

"Not many turf care professionals are fully acquainted with these systems," Sylvester explained. "Con-

## MORE THAN BASIC TRANSPORTATION. BASIC VALUE.

As a basic transportation vehicle, the Cushman Runabout has a lot going for it.

It'll move men, equipment and supplies around quickly and efficiently.

But the real value of a Runabout is that it has a large capacity pickup box that can handle payloads of up to 1,000 pounds. Three-speed synchromesh transmission, tow hitch and special tires that go easy on delicate turf. All standard. And Cushman's innovative Radial Frame design combines easy serviceability with a smooth ride.

You have two Runabout models to choose from: an 18-hp model that seats two, and an economical 12-hp model that seats one. Both engines are air-cooled and designed to be fuel stingy and ruggedly dependable.

What it all adds up to is basic value. A feature that the Runabout

shares with all Cushman vehicles. Ask your Cushman dealer for an on-turf demonstration today.

**CUSHMAN®**  
The Labor-Saving Turf System.

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