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Golfdom

JULY 2005 • VOLUME 61 • NO. 7



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Superintendents seek to save money in other areas of their maintenance budgets to offset increased fuel costs.

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What we learned from building this machine...



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NAME	MA1	NAME	MEAN	NAME	TX2	VA1	NAME	AZ1	MN1
LS - 44	8.0	LS - 44	97.6	LS - 44	5.8	5.0	LS - 44	7.0	6.7
Penncross	7.0	Penncross	96.7	Penn A - 1	5.9	4.2	Penn A - 1	6.6	6.1
Benchmark DSR	6.0	Penn A-1	96.1	Benchmark DSR	5.5	4.1	Benchmark DSR	6.3	6.3
Penn A-1	4.7	Benchmark DSR	95.6	Penncross	4.4	4.5	Penncross	6.9	5.3
LSD Value	1.7	LSD Value	9.6	LSD Value	0.6	0.5	LSD Value	0.8	0.5

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Marty Ebel enjoys playing golf. He hits the ball pretty well for the average Joe, usually scoring in the 90s. While there is an issue with Ebel's golf game, it has nothing to do with his skill level.

Ebel says the golf industry doesn't embrace him as a player. Because he's an amputee — he doesn't have legs from above his knees — Ebel says he's been made to feel like an outcast at some golf courses. Worse, Ebel says others with similar disabilities, including paraplegics, have been treated the same.

What a pity — not for Ebel but for the people in the golf industry who have caused him this humiliation.

Ebel doesn't want you to feel sorry for him. He's a strong soul who's out to prove that he and others with such disabilities belong on the same golf courses as able-bodied players.

The 47-year-old Massachusetts lawyer played golf long before he lost his legs in a front-loader accident 21 years ago, and nobody is about to stop him from playing now. In fact, when Ebel plays now he says the game feels the same as it did when he was able to walk a course with his two feet.

And it's a beautiful feeling. But unfortunately, that good feeling can quickly turn into a sinking feeling in Ebel's gut when the dark clouds of presumption and prejudice roll in. That's when others — from golf course employees to players — cast Ebel and his specially designed single-rider golf car in a dubious light and charge that:

"He's going to slow everybody down with his plodding play."

"He's going to tear up the green with that funky golf car."

"He has no business being out there."

Ebel doesn't get that treatment everywhere, but he still says the golf industry has a long way to go when it comes to servicing some disabled golfers appropriately.

It sounds from Ebel that some courses are downright discriminatory in their approach, not to mention ungracious. While other courses are undoubtedly less insulting, it's

Giving Them Golf — And So Much More

BY LARRY AYLWARD



**COURSES NEED
TO LOOK INTO
SUPPLYING
SINGLE-RIDER
GOLF CARS TO
PLAYERS WITH
DISABILITIES**

probably safe to assume they would rather not have to deal with disabled golfers like Ebel if they don't have to.

Like a lot of folks, Ebel has heard everyone from the leaders of the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) to the superintendent of the nine-hole public golf course in Smalltown, America, clamoring that the stagnant golf industry needs to do something to attract new golfers and increase rounds played. So Ebel doesn't understand why golf courses don't do a better job of rolling out the welcome mat to attract players with disabilities like his own. The industry would benefit with a spike in rounds played if it did, insists Ebel, a trustee with the National Amputee Golf Association.

Golf courses by law are required to make their facilities accessible to disabled people, according to the Americans with Disabilities Act. But Ebel insists that most courses have not made a concerted effort to do so.

This is where the matter gets murky. If the law says golf courses must be made more accessible to the disabled, shouldn't that require golf courses to purchase single-rider golf cars? While Ebel admits the law isn't explicit, he does believe its wording is clear enough to require golf courses to supply single-rider cars. Incidentally, only a small percentage of the nation's roughly 17,000 golf courses do supply them.

Ebel believes that one reason golf courses have balked at buying single-rider cars is because they believe there isn't a large enough audience of disabled golfers to use them. For that reason, Mike Tinkey, the deputy executive director of the NGCOA, believes golf courses shouldn't be required to purchase single-rider cars. But Ebel insists

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