

Preparing a Course for a National Tournament

By John Nylund, Golf Course Superintendent
Braemar Golf Club, Edina, Minnesota

On June 25 through July 1, 1979 I had the opportunity to host a United States Golf Association National Tournament. It was my first major tournament at Braemar Golf Course. When I heard we were getting the tournament I was somewhat apprehensive about preparing for it.

In August 1978 we were approached about hosting the Women's Public Links Championship. Coffin Memorial Golf Course in Indianapolis was scheduled to host the tournament but last July they received an incredible amount of rain which virtually destroyed their course.

The U.S.G.A. immediately set out to find a course to replace Coffin Memorial. We were approached in August 1978 and asked to host the tournament. Our City Council gave final approval for the tournament and it was set to be held at Braemar in June 1979.

I received a call from Tom Meeks of the U.S.G.A. in October 1978 and he arrived at the course to check out arrangements and inspect the facility. We toured each hole of the golf course and he decided on all yardages to be used by the women at this time. I was amazed at the number of men's tees he was going to use. We also discussed cutting heights of greens, tees, collars, fairways and roughs. He also set out of bounds and hazard markings. After Tom Left I received a detailed list of hole-by-hole requirements nine months before the tournament.

The winter passed and in April I received a call from Al Radko (National Director of the Green Section) and Carl Schwartzkopf (Director of the North Central Region of the Green Section). They arrived a few weeks later at the golf course. We toured each hole and Mr. Radko gave me many ideas

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President Sandy Tatum of the U.S.G.A. congratulates John Nylund on the excellent condition of his course.

for improvements on our course. I enjoyed their visit and both were a great help in preparing for the tournament. Mr. Radko was very thorough in his observations of the golf course and sent me many helpful items of literature.

As the tournament grew closer I was requested to double cut all greens daily at 3/16" one week prior to the tournament to achieve an 8'6" stimpmeter reading. I found that our greens didn't roll 8'6" because we were using a triplex mower and because of the heavy rains we had prior to the tournament. Being a public golf course I was reluctant to cut the greens much lower before the tournament week arrived. I eventually lowered them to 5/32" double cut and achieved a much longer reading on the stimpmeter. Also the rains stopped and the greens were able to dry out somewhat.

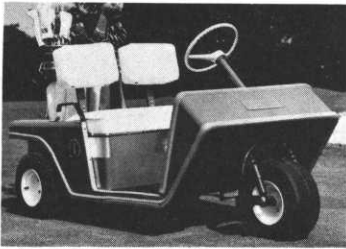
Finally, tournament week arrived and my crew was on a night and morning shift. Everything except roughs were mowed daily and cups and tee placements were set by the U.S.G.A. officials daily at 6:00 a.m. The U.S.G.A. officials were very thorough and precise to avoid any rules violations and were constantly watching for any trouble areas.

During the entire week Carl Schwartzkopf was at the course to help out if needed. It is nice knowing you have an individual with his qualifications at a moment's notice. Thanks to everyone, the week was a huge success.

Lori Castillo of Hawaii was the eventual winner and should go a long way in her golfing career. The final match was refereed by Frank Tatum, Jr., President of the United States Golf Association. He is a very distinguished gentleman and a fine speaker. He had many fine things to say about golf courses in this area which he said were some of the finest in the country. There are so many people involved in hosting a major tournament and each has to do his or her job to make it a success. Our committee people did a great job which made every contestant very happy. Many said they will remember this championship for a long time. I found that having this tournament has made Braemar a much better course. Many jobs were completed before the tournament came that may have gone unfinished had we not hosted this tournament. I feel I learned a lot from the U.S.G.A. officials before and during the tournament that should help me prepare for future tournaments. Many of the procedures involved before a tournament would make a great session during our Annual Conference.

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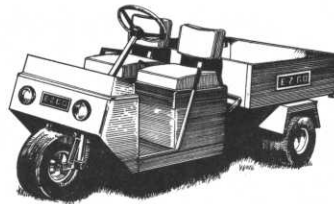
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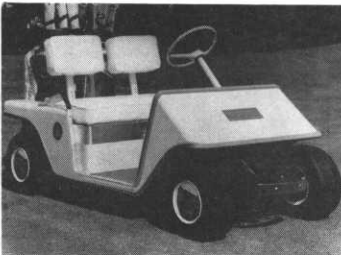
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The U.S.G.A. is willing to send their officials for a portion of our conference to explain the details in preparing for a tournament. I think it would be very interesting to have them attend our conference this December. Please let me know if you agree.

I met many nice people during this tournament and honestly had a wonderful time. It is something a golf course should look forward to hosting and should give something back to the game of golf. After all, if it wasn't for the game of golf, we might all be working at jobs we dislike.

EXTRA EFFORT

The following superintendents have hosted important state tournaments during the last month. Each sponsoring group reports the courses were in excellent shape and that the cooperation of the host superintendent was outstanding.

Golf competitions are what stimulates interest among the public and club members. The superintendent plays a very important part in every competition and these men did an outstanding job.

George Ostler, Hillcrest Country Club - Minnesota Golf Association Amateur Championship; Jim Lindblad, Wayzata Country Club - Minnesota Women's Golf Association Match Play Championship; Roger Kisch, Southview Country Club - Tapemark Charity Pro-Am; Irv Novak, Minnetonka Country Club - National Car Open Championship.

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