



RESORT GOLF

by Scott Hoffmann, Superintendent
Madden's on Gull Lake

As superintendent of one of Minnesota's resort golf courses, I would like to write about some aspects of resort golf that may differ from most golf operations.

Probably one of the most fundamental differences with most resort golf is that there are few members, no boards, and no greens chairmen. There are also no leagues, and few, if any, club-sponsored tournaments which place tremendous demands on a superintendent's time with added responsibilities. We do, however, have circumstances unique to the resort industry. There are work scheduling problems related to convention groups which comprise 70% of our business. Maintenance schedules must be worked around meeting times and free times. Most guests, whether convention groups or summer vacationers, have made reservations at Madden's up to a year in advance. This gives us the obligation to provide the best possible conditions for their limited stay, no matter what time of year. This also makes it extremely difficult to close the courses due to rain.

Even though resort golfers seem to take their golf in a more relaxed stride, they have come to demand more from the golf courses each year. This, I am sure, is partly the result of ever-improving golf course conditions throughout the state, and exposure of midwestern golfers to sunbelt golf resorts through winter vacations and televised tournaments. At Madden's we are responding to this with a continual upgrading of facilities and long range improvements which have included the rebuilding of several greens and tees. After working at both the country club and public golf course levels where the golf is usually the sole reason for the facility's existence, it was difficult to adjust to a resort golf course being just a segment of a larger business where much of the attention is not always focused on the golf course. This makes it ever-important for the superintendent to have clear communication channels with owners and other management personnel.

In addition to management of the golf courses, the grounds crew is also charged with a large percentage of grounds maintenance on resort property. This includes mowing, trimming, landscape projects, sprinkler system installation, dock installation and removal, and tree removal which results in from 60-75 cords of firewood each year for our guests units. We also maintain the trap range, airport and owner residences.

All our jobs hold special blessings in some shape or form. Resort golf also holds its share of challenges and rewards in addition to enjoying a wonderful area in which to work and live. As Mr. Madden stated so well: "Once you get a little Pine Beach sand in your shoes, you will never want to leave". After eight years at Madden's, I couldn't agree more!

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