

The Game of Golf Is Played on Grass

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When the golf course is in good shape, everything at the club seems to go well. How obvious. . . or is it!

Why is it, then, that today's golf course superintendent must compete—perhaps struggle is a better word—for the machinery, manpower, materials, and “the budget” to do his or her job? Sometimes clubs and courses appreciate the obvious. If the golf course is in good shape, the rest of the facility hums. People bring guests who pay guest or green fees. This factor impacts favorably on the food and beverage portion of the club, and it helps the facility's cash flow. Members and guests buy logo shirts and sweaters, benefiting the golf professional. Everyone is happy and the club or facility is healthy.

Consider what happens, though, when several greens or fairways are lost, tees are divoted and devoid of turf, the roughs and stream banks are not well cut, and trash, tree limbs, and litter are scattered about the course. Who is happy then? Would you bring guests or sponsor business outings at your club or course? Probably not, or only with a multitude of apologies and excuses.

With less play, food and beverage sales suffer and golf carts go unrented. Golf shirts remain on the shelves and everyone begins to grumble. Attention is then focused on, you guessed it, the golf course superintendent.

Do you think a golf course superintendent wants to present a shabby golf course? Is that individual, as a professional, pleased with what he or she sees out there? No, not in the least. So why does it happen?

I submit it often is a question of budget priorities. *The golf course is not getting its fair share of the golf course income.*

Specifically, what percentage of course income is being used to maintain the golf course? Do you think it is 20%, 33% or 50%?

Figure it out. If the club has an income of, say, \$2 million per year and the golf course maintenance budget is \$400,000 per year, then the maintenance budget is 20% of the entire club or golf course income. Twenty percent does not sound like very much, and often it isn't enough. Where is the other 80% going?

Shouldn't it be a goal to allow the golf course to be maintained at a level where all the departments are humming and everyone is happy?

Only you can know. It bothers me that golf course maintenance budgets often do not receive their fair share of the club income, and when the course is not perfect, the superintendent is criticized. I submit the real culprit is the budget policy—not providing what is needed to do the job well.

Perhaps a better sales pitch is needed. I hope these comments will help people realize the obvious. . . the game of golf is played on grass, and providing properly for its maintenance should be a course's number-one priority.

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