

Top Ten Tips on Equipment Management

This article was submitted by Tom Harris of G. L. Cornell Company. The paper dates back 10 years ago when it was presented at the 1962 Turf Conference and Show in Miami. Read it over carefully, for everything stated still stands true today. This paper was originally presented by Roger J. Thomas, Commercial Products Manager of Jacobsen Manufacturing Company.

Our company's interest for dealer service training during the last decade has prompted me to choose an important phase of golf course maintenance: In-Service-Training.

Some course superintendents have elaborate equipment training programs, while others I have visited depend on the "Catch On Method." The latter has reference to the attitude of superintendents who feel that operators will learn by mistakes which, unfortunately, reflect directly back on the superintendent of the course. Here is a collection of training suggestions from superintendents throughout the country. Each letter of the title "Top Ten Tips" can be meaningful in good golf course maintenance practices:

T-Train the operator to report missing parts on the equipment. (Slide of gas cap missing on tractor.) Certainly, as busy as superintendents are, they can't possibly watch every part on all equipment they use. It makes good sense to encourage operators to report any parts missing on equipment. Suppose this tractor was caught in a down-pouring rain on its return to the equipment shed. Unnecessary work would have to be performed which brings about rising costs of maintenance.

O-Observing and reporting general course conditions is part of the operator's education and responsibility. (Slide of Branch in trap.) He must be trained for this responsibility. The branch shown in the trap is merely one course condition that should be corrected immediately. Possibility, the operator of the greensmower, or tractor, should take care of it. Who, at your course, has the responsibility for items such as this. Naturally, the superintendent cannot learn every problem that occurs overnight on the entire course. Train operators to report any conditions affecting play before the golfers report them.

P-Projecting the need for replacement parts must be taught to your mechanics. (Slide of worn belt.) Either the mechanic or superintendent should be able to foresee parts needs prior to actual failure. The belt in this slide has but a few hours left. It should be ordered now so as to be prepared for the breakdown rather than create an "emergency" situation.

T-Teach the importance of listening for sounds of impending problems. (Slide of worn pulley shaft.) The pulley on this shaft must have clacked and rattled twenty-five hours before this excessive wear look place. Train the men to report unusual noises; repairs can be kept to a minimum.

E-Educate employees with a planned rainy-day program. (Slide group playing cards.) This is not a planned rainy-day program. True, a form of teaching is present, but it is hardly contributory to good course maintenance practices.

It may be too wet to cut, but not too wet to train. (Slide of instruction on tractor.) This tractor driver will do a

better job or at least has been given instruction and knows the job requirements.

N-Never expect the best performance from poor instruction to workers. (Slide of tractor mower in trap.) Apparently, this tractor driver did not receive enough instruction and has been causing turf damage around the traps. Remember, just because an operator knows how to drive a tractor does not mean he qualifies for turf mowing.

T-Tell the operator to immediately report if the equipment is doing turf damage or if evidences of vandalism appear. (Slide of wet cutting.) This turf is being damaged and its location is quite far from the equipment shed. A good operator will report the condition before further turf damage is done. He can save you many hours of work by doing so.

Evidences of vandalism can be corrected quickly. (Slide of broken flag pole.) When a golfer reports a problem and the superintendent has the answer immediately the general impression left is that the course is well managed and maintained. A golfer respects a course more when it is apparent that it is well maintained.

I-Insist that equipment be kept clean to obtain maximum life. (Slide of dirty equipment.) How much life can be expected from a piece of equipment being allowed to rust like this?

No gimmicks please! (Slide of dirty equipment with a litter box!) Sometimes the gimmick added will radically affect the performance of the equipment. The collection of stones, cleats, old golf balls, etc., should be made in some other way.

P-Plan regular maintenance checks with the employees present. (Slide of dip stick and oil filter.) One way to up-grade operators, is to make them responsible for certain maintenance checks on their equipment. Though your mechanic is responsible, he must receive steady reminders of regular maintenance checks and most of all, a thorough education on any new pieces of equipment being put into service. Let's not use the philosophy "When all else fails, read the manual."

S-Spare the worker from jobs he cannot capably handle or better yet, train him to know the limitations of the equipment. (Slide of over-turned tractor.) This can be deadly. The operator attempted to cut an area that the tractor could not handle. Training *can be* a matter of life and death.

Nearly any one of the subjects covered by these slides could constitute a one-half hour discussion. One thing I have attempted to put across by this presentation is the importance of training. Training, even with the most informal plan, means work but can lessen the need for direct supervision of men. Let these "Top Ten Tips" serve as ideas for formulating some type of plan for continuous training at your course.

ON THE SICK LIST

Ernest Stanley, Quantico Golf Club, Virginia, was recently in the hospital for surgery. We wish him a speedy recovery and hope to see him up and around soon.

Bill Livingston, Norbeck C. C., was also in the hospital for surgery. We are glad to see he has recovered quickly and is back on the job.