



Nine Hole Courses Do They Need A Fulltime Golf Superintendent?

GOLF COURSE superintendents are often a rarity on small, 9-hole courses. Many managers figure they can't afford this "luxury" with their relatively small budgets.

But in a growing number of cases this superintendent and manager line of reasoning is often dead wrong — many of these 9-holers can't afford to be *without* a superintendent.

"There's no question in my mind about it," says Bob Burns, who has managed a 9-hole golf course in Cedar Falls, Iowa, since it opened in 1965. "A 9-hole course needs professional management just as much as the bigger operations."

Burns, who was Iowa's "Superintendent of the Year" in 1972, manages the course at the Beaver Hills Country Club, a privately-owned golf and social club that was a 9-hole course until an additional 9 was added last year.

During its entire seven years as a 9-holer, Burns was employed as superintendent. And this is possibly one reason Beaver Hills was financially able to expand into an 18-hole course so soon.

Looks More Professional

"When you have a superintendent on these small courses, everything looks better — more professional," say Beaver Hills Manager Bob Friis. "And you get more members as a result. We've been at near capacity membership for the last few years because of the quality of our course, and this has enabled us to

finance expansion programs much faster than we ordinarily would have. The program has been very successful."

Burns said he has always managed the course as though it was a big, major operation "within limits of our budget, of course."

The greens are mowed six days a week, cups are changed daily, fairways and tees are mowed three times a week, and roughs once a week.

In addition, Burns maintains complete disease and insect control and a professional fertilization program.

And his equipment is as complete and up to date as any you'll find on the larger country club courses.

"You don't get this kind of course maintenance when you just employ a parttime hired hand to maintain your course, which is often the case with 9-hole golf courses," Burns says.

"On these courses the greens often end up looking just like the fairways, the rough is out of shape, and the entire course is in a state of deterioration. And you'll often end up spending more in the end to shape things up again, and you'll certainly lose members to competing courses that are well kept."

Good Insurance

Manager Friis agrees: "When you take a look at that big initial investment in establishing a golf course and country club, you'll quickly realize that hiring a golf course superintendent is just sensi-

ble insurance to protect that investment."

Burns points out the extreme amount of technical knowledge necessary to properly manage a course today as a major point in favor of employing a professional superintendent.

"He must know turf grasses and maintenance techniques, soils, fertilizers, drainage, insects, turf diseases, fungicides, weeds, herbicides, and the tools and equipment necessary for modern turf maintenance.

"Sometimes it's even difficult for us to keep up with the different insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides and their proper usage," he says, "so I don't see how a parttimer can even begin to do it."

Environmentally Conscious

"In addition, many of these products must be handled professionally at all times. This aspect of golf course management is getting more critical every year."

Burn's biggest problem at Beaver Hills has been loss of elms from Dutch Elm Disease. Beaver Hills lies in a naturally wooded area — primarily elms — so tree replacement is an important part of his job.

He has worked up, on paper, a long-range landscaping program for the course which he says should solve most of the problems and enhance the beauty of the course when completed.

A member participation program for tree replacement was also initiated, with individual members buying a replacement tree, and, in turn, having it named after them.

"This has worked great," Burns says, "and we've added 150-200 trees under this program so far. The members enjoy having a tree named after them."

Burns maintains an intensive control program against weeds, insects, and diseases such as: snow mold, dollarspot, brown patch, and others.

Because of this program, Beaver Hills has had no serious turf disease or insect problems since it began operation in 1965 . . . "a benefit of having a professional superintendent," Manager Friis strongly believes.

Burns says Beaver Hills is the envy of many other small course owners, who marvel at the condition of the course when they play there.

"Any course could look like this if they would come to realize that golf course maintenance is a specialized, technical job requiring trained men to get it done correctly," Manager Friis adds. □