GOLF CAR SALES SHOULD IMPROVE AS FLEETS FAIL

by THOMAS PACIELLO, equipment editor

Golf car sales should increase in 1982, despite the problems of rising production costs and high interest rates, according to many golf car manufacturers.

One of the main reasons for the positive sales outlook is the effect of reconditioned cars on the market. "Many golf courses are reconditioning their golf cars to get one or two more years out of them," said Tom Duffy, Harley-Davidson Milwaukee, WI. "In 1982, many of these reconditioned fleets will need to be replaced." All of the manufacturers contacted by *Weeds Trees & Turf* echoed Duffy's comments, noting that many golf courses have pushed their fleet turnover from 3-4 years back to 4-5 years. When the interest rate boom occurred last year many courses postponed their golf fleet purchases. Manufacturers are predicting that 1982 will be the year that many old golf car fleets are replaced.

In addition to reconditioning cars, golf courses have resorted to other methods to beat the high cost of borrowing money while replacing their golf car fleet. Manufacturers noted an increase in the number of leasing and lease/purchase agreements. Creative financing is also on the rise but usually between the golf course and the dealer, not the manufacturer.

While high interest rates have affected golf course purchases, it has also made the marketplace more competitive. Manufacturers told *WTT* that the high cost of money, materials and labor have made it very difficult to compete simply on price. "When production costs go up so does the selling price," said Wayne Wilson, Davis 500, Inc., Greenville, SC. "Manufacturers are just trying to hold down costs as much as possible." Golf car prices for 1982 rose from as little as $63 to as much as $1085, according to comparisons between the 1981 and 1982 Golf Car Guide. "Competition in the golf car market makes sales more difficult and it affects the car's pricing and features," said Duffy. "Two of the features that we are stressing is that our cars are quieter and more economical." Most golf car firms noted that efficiency was one of their biggest selling points.

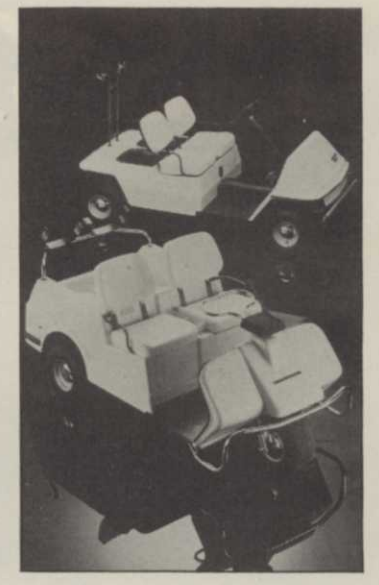
While some manufacturers will rely on business from new golf courses, many agree that the lion's share of the business is in retaining existing accounts and converting others. In updating the Golf Car Guide for this year, *WTT* noticed that three companies changed ownership and two dropped out of the business altogether. With a limited amount of existing and conversion business available, if the predicted sales increase does not develop, check this guide next year for a current list of golf car manufacturers.

Possibly taking a lead from automobile manufacturers, most golf car companies have expanded the list of options that can be added to their 1982 models. Not every company could lay claim to a model that sports a radio, clock, cigarette lighter, refrigerator, television, sunroof, musical horn, whitewall tires, side and rear curtains, etc. (such as Elmco's Royal Ride 21E); however, even the moderately priced models are becoming more ambitious in how much optional equipment they make available.

While the average golf course turns over its fleet every 4-5 years, golf car manufacturers told *WTT* that the average life of their cars is approximately 8 years. Some manufacturers noted that one of the reasons for this difference is proper maintenance. Every manufacturer responding to *WTT*'s golf car survey stated that proper maintenance was the key to longer vehicle life. Estimated maintenance costs ranged from $30 to $200 per year.

continues on page 44

Golf carts *from page 42*



1982 GOLF CAR GUIDE

GOLF CARS	Model	Price	Fuel Mode	Wheels	Steering	Turning Radius (in.)	Weight (lb.)	Load Capacity (lb.)	Frame Mat.	Body Mat.	Warranty (yr.)	Mileage	Lifespan (yr.)	Service Contract	Maintained by	Forward sp.	Reverse sp.	Fuel cap.
Club Car Augusta, GA 404/863-3000	DS	3053	E	4	SW	276	815	750	Al	Fg	2 Pt. 1 L	–	8-10	Yes	P	14	7	
Legend Golf Cars **Eagle Vehicles** Dallas, TX 214/388-7431	EV3	2795	E	3	SW	240	894	750	St	Ur	1	–	–	No	P	12	12	
	EV4	2925	E	4	SW	300	935	750	St	Ur	1	–	–	No	P	12	12	
Electric Carrier Corp. San Antonio, TX 512/826-8694	Caddy	2795	E	4	SW	168	950	800	St	St	1	10 hrs.	5+	Yes	P	12	12	
Elmco Cooksville, IL 309/725-3533	11E	5000	E	4	SW	222	855	850	Al	Fg	1	18 mi.	10	No	P	14	7	
	L21E	6000	E	4	SW	247	975	800	Al	Fg	1	18 mi.	10	No	P	14	7	
E-Z Go/Textron Augusta, GA 800/241-5855	X440	3090	E	3	SW	210	–	550	St	St	1	–	–	Yes	P	4	4	
	X444	3220	E	4	SW	246	–	550	St	St	1	–	–	Yes	P	4	4	
	GX440	3220	G	3	SW	210	–	550	St	St	1	★[3]	–	Yes	P	4	4	
	GX444	3260	G	4	SW	246	–	550	St	St	1	★[3]	–	Yes	P	4	4	
Harley-Davidson Milwaukee, WI 414/342-4680	MGIII	3125	E	3	SW T	108 128	532[1]	750	St	Fg	–	1.5 hrs.	8	Yes	–	10	10	
	MGIV	3310	E	4	T	122	569[1]	750	St	Fg	–	1.5 hrs.	8	Yes	–	11	10	
	WGIII	2960	G	3	SW T	108 128	598[2]	750	St	Fg	–	25mpg	6	Yes	–	12	12	8.5
	WGIV	3125	G	4	SW	122	716[2]	750	St	Fg	–	25mpg	6	Yes	–	12	12	8.5
Melex, USA Raleigh, NC 919/828-7645	112	2950	E	3	SW	99	670[1]	–	St	St	1	–	–	No	P	12	12	
	212	3060	E	4	SW	111	715[1]	–	St	St	1	–	–	No	P	12	12	
Taylor-Dunn Mfg. Anaheim, CA 714/956-4040	Teebird	3540	E	4	SW	124	1132	1050	St	St	1	8 hr.	7	Yes	P	11	11	
Yamaha Motor Corp., USA, Cypress, CA 714/761-7300	E3	–	E	4	SW	114	595[1]	–	St	Ur	1	–	10	Yes	D	12	12	
	A3	–	G	4	SW	114	684[1]	–	St	Ur	1	–	10	Yes	D	12	12	
TURF VEHICLES																		
Blasius Electric Truck Anaheim, CA 714/828-7155	164	4950	G	4	SW	–	1240	3000	St	St	1	–	–	No	–	13	10	4

Model	Price	Fuel Mode	Wheels	Steering	Turning Radius (in.)	Weight (lb.)	Load Capacity (lb.)	Frame Mat.	Body Mat.	Warranty (yr.)	Mileage	Lifespan (yr.)	Service Contract	Maintained by	Forward sp.	Reverse sp.	Fuel cap.
Cushman/ OMC Lincoln Lincoln, NB 404/475-9581	532	–	G	4	SW	120	1110	1500	St	St	90day	30mpg	8	No	P/D	23	4	7
	530	–	G	3	SW	78	975	1500	St	St	90day	30mpg	8	No	P/D	23	4	6
	531	–	G	3	HB	90	990	1000	St	St	90day	30mpg	8	No	P/D	18	4	6
	549	–	G	3	HB	45	535	250	St	St	90day	30mpg	8	No	P/D	14	–	1¼
Hahn Inc. Evansville, IL 812/428-2024	Spray Pro	4975	G	4	SW	–	1160	1500	St	St	90day	–	10	No	F	11	–	5
Heckendorn Mfg. Cedar Point, KS	73901	–	G	3	SW	–	570	–	St	–	1	–	10	No	P	8	2	1½
	75902	–	G	4	SW	–	862	–	St	–	1	–	10	No	P	8	2	3
	76901	–	G	4	SW	–	1300	–	St	–	1	–	10	No	P	8	2	10
	77902	–	G	5	SW	–	1010	–	St	–	1	–	10	No	P	8	2	3
	78901	–	G	5	SW	–	1500	–	St	–	1	–	10	No	P	8	2	10
E-Z Go/Textron Augusta, GA 800/241-5855	GT-7	4500	G	3	SW	264	1400	1500	St	St	90day	–	5-7	Yes	P	–	–	8.5
Jacobsen/Textron Racine, WI 414/637-6711	UV-4	7500	G	4	SW	–	1460	1500	St	St	1	9.3mpg	5	No	P	–	–	5.3
Rivlex Ind.	Daihatsu	4800	G	4	SW	150	1180	1300	St	St	1	40mpg	–	No	P	12	12	8.6
Smithco Wayne, PA 215/688-4009	Little Red	2000	G	3	HB	–	650	500	St	St	1	–	8	No	P	–	–	.9
	Red Rider	2500	G	3	HB	–	750	1000	St	St	1	–	8	No	P	–	–	.9
Taylor-Dunn Mfg. Anaheim, CA 714/956-4040	Model 5	4065	E	4	SW	132	1428	6000	St	St	–	8hrs.	7	–	P	12	12	–

abbreviations:
SW—steering wheel **HB**—handlebar **T**—tiller **Al**—aluminum **St**—steel **Fg**—fiberglas **Ur**—urethane **P**—purchaser **D**—dealer **F**—field service rep

Notes:
1. weight without batteries 2. weight without gasoline 3. 18 holes/quart