

# GOLF: THE BLUE CHIP OF THE GREEN INDUSTRY

More than 20 percent of the golf course superintendents polled by *Weeds Trees & Turf* magazine in November say their course is part of a real estate venture. Recent National Golf Foundation statistics show 80 percent of the 150 golf courses opened in 1982 were linked to real estate developments. Clearly the future of golf is highly dependent upon fairways lined with homes and condominiums.

The property of the golf course is being realized for its value. The superintendent's role in the management of the property may have increasing significance as a result. The survey showed 80 percent of the superintendents are responsible for the clubhouse landscape, 28 percent in charge of the clubhouse building, 22 percent responsible for tennis courts, and 21 percent in charge of the Pro Shop. Responsibility extended for some superintendents to pools, sod and tree nurseries, picnic areas, parking lots, baseball fields, a marina, and apartment and hotel areas. Greenkeeper as a title no longer fits the golf course superintendent according to the survey.

The superintendents reported an average of 44 golf cars are operated on their course. In 27 percent of the cases the superintendent manages the golf car operation. Pros do the job in 48 percent of the cases. Others perform the task on 25 percent of the courses.

The salesman for the turf supply company is the superintendent's leading advisor on maintenance problems, being consulted twice as frequently as the extension agent, 61 to 30 percent. Following extension agents are other superintendents as advisors in 25 percent of the cases. The technical staff of associations are consulted by 15 percent of the superintendents for maintenance problems.

Nevertheless, participation by superintendents in associations is extremely high. Nearly half the su-

perintendents belonged to both the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and their local association. A third indicated some involvement with the United States Golf Association Green Section.

Superintendents do most of their budgeting and planning from October through December. Chemical buying is heaviest in March through May. Equipment buying is greatest in January through April.

The survey indicated a greater percentage of private and semi-private courses than NGF's figures. The percentage of municipal courses, 17 percent, agreed with NGF. Our survey respondents represented private courses in 53 percent of the cases and daily fee/semi-private in 35 percent. This may account for the 22 percent attached to real estate developments. But, the dominance of real estate venture courses may tip the scales toward private and semi-private in the future.

Two thirds of the superintendents manage 18-hole courses, 23

percent manage 9-holers, and 10 percent manage courses of 27 or more holes. On an average, the superintendents oversee 132 acres of course area.

The average crew consists of 1 foreman, 4 year-round employees and 5 seasonal workers. A fourth of the superintendents had no foreman whereas 10 percent have 2 or more foremen, a figure aligned to the percentage of 27 or more hole courses.

The message that cart paths are management assets has been received by the superintendents participating. Eighty-eight percent had cart paths of some type. Asphalt was the construction material for two-thirds of the group, gravel for 45 percent, and cement/concrete for 9 percent.

An average of 60 acres of golf course is irrigated. Greens are irrigated by 94 percent of the superintendents, tees by 92 percent, and fairways by 68 percent. Another 11 percent said some fairways are irrigated. Only three

*Continued on page 26*

**TABLE 1** During which months of the year do you .....(Multiple answers)

	plan budget	buy chemicals	buy equipment
Base: (total reporting)	91	97	92
January	15%	15%	23%
February	9	22	28
March	2	33	38
April	4	34	29
May	3	25	11
June	8	16	4
July	3	19	5
August	9	14	2
September	18	20	2
October	31	20	13
November	33	22	17
December	27	9	18
As needed	-	1	9

percent said the entire course was irrigated.

To gauge the activity of golf courses we asked for rounds played each month throughout the year. Approximately half of the superintendents reported no rounds played in December, January, and February. A third reported no activity in March. But nearly half reported activity year round.

The busiest months for superintendents nationally are June, July and August with more than 4,000 rounds per month each as an average. The slowest months are December and January with an average of roughly 725 rounds played each month.

Superintendents have a high regard for education with only 5 percent saying a turf, agronomy or horticulture degree was unnecessary. Nearly 60 percent felt such a degree was a great help and more than a third felt it was helpful. Compare this to a 16 percent figure for landscape contractors who indicated such education was some-

TABLE 2

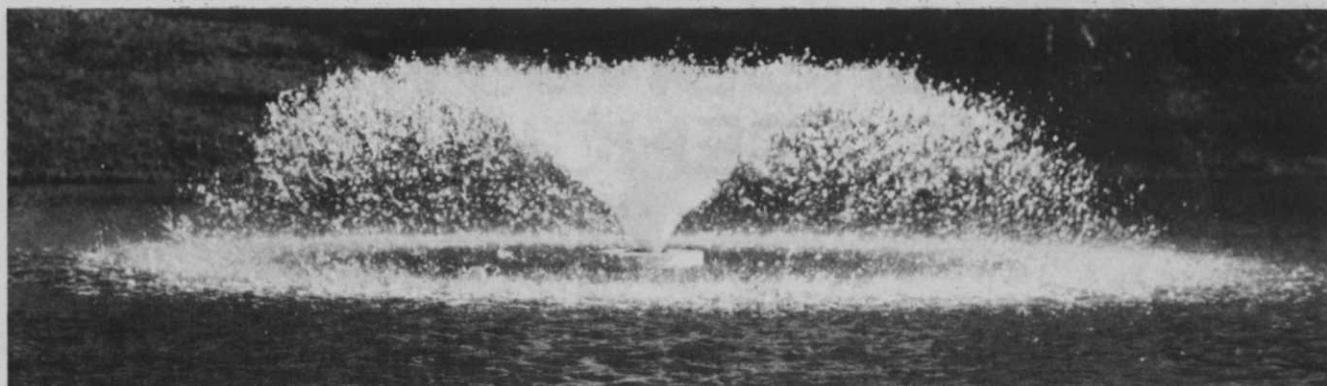
Please list by month the estimated number of rounds played on your course.

	Base: 72 (total reporting)	Number of rounds played:				
		Mean	0	1 — 1000	1001 — 3000	3001 — 5000
January	698	51%	35%	7%	3%	4%
February	793	50	35	6	6	4
March	1274	33	36	17	10	4
April	2109	7	38	31	17	8
May	3271	-	24	36	24	17
June	4018	-	15	33	28	24
July	4336	-	14	28	35	24
August	4137	-	14	31	33	22
September	2987	1	22	36	31	10
October	2017	3	40	38	11	8
November	1220	22	46	19	10	3
December	711	46	36	11	4	3

thing they look for in hiring.

Between the National Golf Foundation's figures, the GCSAA and USGA educational support, and now a forum of organizations determined to protect the vitality of the game of golf, this prime Green

Industry is in good hands. It may not be experiencing the same phenomenal growth of the 1960's, but it's foundation is so strong it enjoys a security not found in other fields. It's the blue chip stock of the Green Industry. **WTT**



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