

GOLF 'SCAPING

When golfers goof off

■ BAM! POW! WHACK!

You're Batman, and abusive golfers are the Penguin, the Joker and the Riddler.

Ever feel like that's what you'd like to do to players who abuse the course? Unfortunately, when you've done all you can to preach respect, all you can do is keep your eyes open for blatant abuse, and hope for the best from the majority of your players. It's easy to spot the troublemakers: no shirts, and using language normally reserved for the likes of Madonna. They treat the golf course like a rented car.

And the popular culture doesn't help. Perhaps you've seen that commercial for a brand of casual slacks: the barely 20-somethings, with caps on backwards and pants rolled up to the knees, hit balls

Iceman: cooperative players help him stay cool, keep the course beautiful.



here and there as they recite a litany of their favorite rock and roll tunes. All the commercial doesn't show is the beer.

Then there are the golfers who—while they dress well and mind their language—insist on leaving bare divots, shuffling spiked feet on greens and driving carts in areas where they don't belong.

For that reason, we have “the sign” and the seed mix, and the verbal warning, and the pleading, and finally, the outright begging. It's all you can do, really, short of expelling people from the course.

Rod Ice-man, superintendent at the Shady Hollow Country Club, Massillon, Ohio, has very little trouble getting his golfers to cooperate—probably because he's done everything possible to deliver the message. Sure, being at a private course, the members treat it more like it's their own, but human nature always slips up, and that's where signs and other tools help.

Prudent about cart paths—“I'm not a firm believer in cart paths throughout the entire golf course,” says Iceman. “When we renovated, we paved only the areas that were beat up badly by carts.”

Two years ago, four of Shady Hollow's greens were re-designed.

That makes sense. Why put a path

Signs are hard to miss when they're big and bold.



'The membership at a private club wants to take a little bit of pride in the course, so they're going to help out a little bit more.'

where you don't need one? You save money, and the course looks more “natural.”

“Scatter” signs at the end of tee areas or on approaches direct cart traffic.

Both Iceman and his golfers prefer the scatter signs to ropes.

“They don't fade, and golfers don't run into them as they do with ropes,” says Iceman.

All directional signs are moved up and down the fairway, depending on where the traffic has done the most damage.

Help it grow back—Columbia ParCar offers a wide-mouthed bottle as an accessory, which Iceman has installed on each of his 60 carts. It's a simple, yet effective tool. There's also a hinged box at each tee filled with a seed mix.

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Scatter signs make the message clear: 'Spread out!'

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"We've asked membership to use the seed mixes on tees or fairways if there's no divot to replace," says Iceman. "The tee box seed mix was an idea we weren't sure was going to work. A lot of times (golfers) think that's what the employees are hired to do."

Riders, of course, are asked to cross at 90-degree angles. Another simple axiom: if you don't have to cross the fairway, don't. Stay near the edge.

Shady Hollow is a private course with



Seed mix is hard to miss, but players often think their divots won't hurt.

325 members. In June, it played host to the Ohio Amateur tournament.

Iceman, a progressive superintendent, recently added ornamental grasses along the approach to some holes.

"I didn't think I was going to be a big fan of ornamental grasses," he says. "Then I heard Bill Hendricks from Klein Nurseries speak at an Ohio Turf Foundation meeting one year. In certain places they do have their uses. They're becoming popular in home landscapes, why not see them in golf course landscapes?"

The choice of machinery used around the course has also changed from time to time in Iceman's 10-year stay there. Lightweight riding units are used more often, and greens are mowed with walk-behind mowers to reduce compaction.

Iceman changes control products often, a lesson he learned from Joe Vargas at Michigan State.

—Terry McIver

Press releases should emphasize environment

■ Any press releases sent from the golf course superintendent's office to local media should emphasize the course's environmental aspects, according to Jerry Coldiron, CGCS, of Boone Links and Lassing Pointe public golf courses in Florence, Ky.

Recent national media reports—including those by the *New York Times*, CBS-TV, and radio commentator Paul Harvey—have castigated golf courses and the materials they use as being detrimental to health and nature.

"We're real proud of the communication job we do here," notes Boone Links/Lassing Pointe superintendent Jerry Coldiron. "We hired someone who has done some writing for us—Andrea Conroy,

a local writer with Rivertown Communications—and told her what we wanted to say, and she did a good job.

"We've got to get the word out before the media questions come," Coldiron continues. "So we've really been pounding this environmental message home."

The courses also feature Audubon Society/native area signage at 15 strategic points, and "no-spray" buffer zones around the entire 150-acre golf complex.

Though details of the course itself (which appeared in the original release) have been omitted, the sample below shows how press releases can be worded in order to be received in a positive light by the community.

—Jerry Roche

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

June 3, 1994

For further information, contact:

Jerry Coldiron, superintendent, phone no.

Jeff Kruepleman, golf pro, phone no.

Lassing Pointe, Boone County's second public golf course, celebrated its Grand Opening on May 18. The course, nominated as one of the top municipal courses in America, is located in Union, Ky.

Designed by Michael J. Hurdzan Golf Course Design in Columbus, Ohio, Lassing Pointe...was created on 160 rolling, wooded acres in central Boone County. Says golf superintendent Jerry Coldiron, "This is a beautiful piece of property and all involved remained committed to keeping it environmentally sound in every way. In addition to adding a much-needed course for our growing population, we have created a greenspace and nature preserve in a part of the county which is undergoing substantial development."

A 15-acre parcel of mature forest, commonly called Lassing Woods, remains nearly untouched and borders on holes 10, 12 and 13.

Boone County Golf Course and Hurdzan Design worked with the Audubon Society, the Department of Natural Resources, the EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure as little disturbance to the wildlife as possible and to minimize use of pesticides and fertilizers.

Says project manager David Whelchel of Hurdzan: "Land that is well-maintained needs a minimum of pest and weed control since healthy turf is less prone to disease and weed infestation. Boone County's golf courses receive excellent care and should need little chemical treatment."