

# Golfer attitudes toward supers are improving

**M**ost of America's golfers believe that golf course superintendents use pesticides and fertilizers responsibly, according to a new independent study commissioned by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

The study, which was conducted by the National Golf Foundation at the GCSAA's request, looked at the attitudes of a representative group of more than 1,000 golfers.

More than 80 percent of the golfers surveyed believe that superintendents are environmentally responsible and that they use chemicals and water wisely. Nearly two-thirds of golfers now believe that golf courses are good for the environment, up from just 55 percent less than two years ago.

"Golfers believe in the need to protect our environment," says GCSAA president Bruce Williams.

## RESULTS OF THE SURVEY:

### How do you perceive the golf course superintendent at the course you play most frequently?

facility managers	56%
skilled blue collar workers	46%
business people	19%
unskilled, uneducated workers	2%
don't know	4%

### Describe the responsibilities of the golf course superintendent at the course you play most frequently:

maintenance of the golf course	88%
environmental practices	37%
the landscaping	22%
greens mowing	19%
manage golf facility	11%
don't know	3%

### Who is most responsible for the quality of the golf course you play most frequently?

superintendent	76%
general manager	7%
club pro	2%
club manager	2%
don't know	13%

### Who is best equipped to teach golfers ecology and conditioning of the golf course you play most frequently?

superintendent	62%
professional	20%
club manager	4%
general manager	2%
don't know	12%

### What member of staff at the golf course you play most frequently do you come into most frequent

### contact or meet with the most?

club pro	52%
club manager	43%
superintendent	38%
general manager	20%
other	9%
don't know	18%

(note: approximately 90% of the 38% know the superintendent's name)

### What are the main problems and bothers at the course you most frequently play?

All golfers	Prob.(x)	Bother(y)
ball marks on greens	23%	79%
poor tees	64%	73%
low drinking water	63%	71%
poor bunkers	59%	70%
high rough	59%	67%
slow greens	58%	60%
too wet	58%	67%

Avid golfers	Prob.(x)	Bother(y)	Diff.(z)
poor bunkers	75%	59%	+16%
recent aeration of greens	67%	51%	+16%
ball marks on greens	86%	73%	+13%
condition of tees	75%	64%	+11%
frost delays	29%	18%	+11%

x-often or sometimes a problem

y-very or somewhat a bother

z-difference between answers of avid vs. all golfers

### Have you ever supported an environmental/conservation effort?

golfers	42%
non-golfers	39%

"They are very confident about superintendents' abilities to manage courses in an environmentally responsible manner. This study indicates attitudes are improving. Although it's impossible to say for sure, we'd like to think that educational efforts by the GCSAA, USGA and other golf associations have helped to change misperceptions among players."

"Less than 10 percent of golfers recognize the name GCSAA," observes Richard Norton of the NGF. "But among those who recognize it, their view of the superintendent is much, much more positive."

"People aware of the GCSAA are [also] much more favorably disposed to support

the superintendent. And GCSAA affairs have a definite positive impact on attitudes among golfers."

Results of the image section of the study will be used to guide the GCSAA's public relations programs and to create a baseline to measure the success of future education efforts.

"We're making a substantial investment

in educational programs, including our TV show 'Par for the Course' on ESPN," says Williams. "We want to be able to track the effectiveness of our efforts to ensure we're doing the right things to raise the visibility of our members and enhance their image within golf." □

**How important to playability is:**

**very or extremely**

the superintendent's skill	79%
weather	72%
the maintenance budget	59%
the quality of turf equipment	58%
formal education of superintendent	41%

**What are the top five factors you use in choosing where you will play?**

	Top box	Top 2 boxes
cost/price	39%	72%
tee times	28%	68%
quality	27%	69%
close to home	15%	44%
design	12%	33%

**How much do you agree or disagree with this statement: We need to protect the environment.**

	Golfers	Non-golfers
agree	90%	87%
neutral	8%	9%
disagree	2%	4%

**Views of the superintendent:**

	GCSAA(a)	All(b)
supers are most responsible for quality and condition	90%	76%
supers use pesticides responsibly	98%	83%
supers are environmentally responsible	86%	84%

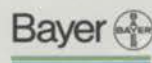
*a-familiar with the GCSAA  
b-all golfers*

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