

Equipment care as simple as 'a glance'

A key component of a turfgrass maintenance operation is the equipment available to perform both daily course preparation and, if needed, major renovations.

Some courses are blessed with a large supply of equipment, but it is the equipment that is serviced and ready to use that greatly influences the planning of turf care activities.

The superintendent relies heavily on the mechanic to maintain this equipment, no matter how old or new it may be. To some degree, the entire turf maintenance staff is responsible for the care of the equipment.

It is a well known fact that preventive maintenance programs can extend the useful life of a piece of equipment.

To a turf manager, a more important aspect of preventive maintenance is that it allows for effective and efficient flow of turf maintenance activities on the course.

This thought was brought into mind when Steve Geller, golf course superintendent and his mechanic Joseph Pope, designed a preventive maintenance system for the equipment at the Cedar Point Club in Suffolk, Va. The system allows the entire crew to participate and share responsibility for equipment upkeep. This strategy provides support for the superintendent and mechanic while fostering a team spirit among the crew.

Steve plans course grooming and maintenance activities well in advance of their occurrence. Prior to doing so, Steve consults with the mechanic and checks an equipment status board located in the shop area.

The board lists all of the equipment inventory. Everything from greensmowers to string trimmers is scheduled for regular maintenance is identified as well as the previous service date.

A significant element of the status board is its simplicity. The maintenance aspects of each piece of equipment vary, but when the equipment (which is

numbered) is ready for use, it is clearly identified as such with a green mark in the status column.

A red mark means the equipment is down or needs to be serviced. This marking system reduces the chances of equipment escaping regularly scheduled maintenance and causing unplanned downtime.

Crew involvement begins when jobs are assigned.

The plans for the day are placed on a job board located in the lunch/locker room. With job assignment in hand, crew members check the status of the equipment needed to complete the day's activity. The status board is conveniently located so that it's easy to tell by a quick glance at the color code, the status of the equipment.

The system is reinforced further by crew members when they report minor equipment performance flaws. Small problems are addressed before they become large.

No system is infallible. Granted, when a new piece of equipment is severely damaged, a crew member will not mistakenly take it out onto the course. There are times, however, when equipment problems go unnoticed, and needless to say, the most aggravating problems are those that could have been prevented. For example, due to busy golfing schedules at Cedar Point Club, a great deal of mowing is done before daylight. A reel can be out of adjustment and cause a poor quality cut. Even worse, a hydraulic hose may give way, and cause a slow leak that does not immediately impair equipment performance.

Both of these problems may go unnoticed until the sun begins to rise. Strategies for unexpected damage control must then be implemented. Turf may have to be removed and/or turf damage repaired. **LM**

*by Keith Happ, writing in the Central Ohio
GCSA News.*

The status board is conveniently located so that it's easy to tell by a quick glance at the color code, the status of the equipment.