



Golf Course Renovation *Out of Sight, But Not Out of Mind*

A RESTORATION OF THE ORIGINAL DESIGNER'S VISION...BUNKERS REPOSITIONED TO REFLECT CHANGING SHOT VALUES...ADDED LENGTH TO SHORT PAR 4S...THESE ARE ALL RELEVANT AND VISIBLE CHANGES THAT CAN COME OUT OF A GOLF COURSE RENOVATION PROJECT.

But, without infrastructure that functions well – the drainage, irrigation, cart paths, etc. – any improvements to strategy will be just window dressing.

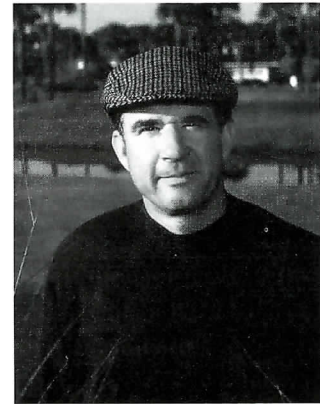
Good playing conditions are consistently ranked high in surveys of golfers by the National Golf Foundation (NGF). Though it can be a tough sell to spend time and money on improvements to infrastructure, having a course that functions well underground is the important first step in good course conditioning.

START WITH AN EVALUATION

When evaluating your facility for possible renovation, the golf course comes first and the clubhouse second. It's tempting to focus on more visible projects, but a course that doesn't drain or has crumbling cart paths will have member retention problems in the long run.

Check in with your club's superintendent for an objective assessment of the following aspects of your course's infrastructure: golf course playing area drainage, storm drainage, irrigation, pumping systems, maintenance equipment, cart paths and turf quality.

A useful tool for predicting life expectancy of each of these components is the "Golf Course Items: Expected Life Cycle" chart available through the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA). The



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expectancies (i.e. asphalt carts paths can be expected to last five – 10 years and concrete paths for 15 – 30 years).

Taking photos and compiling hard facts will assist in communicating the necessity of the project to the members and remove emotion from the decision making process.

PLAN COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION

Once the superintendent has assessed the infrastructure, a plan for replacement and maintenance

Whether a project is led by a golf course architect or is tackled fully in-house, spending the time and money on a thorough assessment of a course's infrastructure and creating a plan for implementation of necessary maintenance and replacement will yield positive results and satisfied members.

So, how do you determine the condition of the infrastructure of your course? How do you move forward with improvements once the weak spots have been identified?

information on this chart is compiled by ASGCA and approved by the Allied Associations of Golf.

It lists the main components of the golf course and their average life

can be composed. Beware of the temptation to patch things up or "make do" with a temporary fix. The adage, "If a job can be done twice, its worth doing right the first time!"

is particularly applicable when it comes to course infrastructure.

A golf course architect should help quarterback the plan's composition and communication. The advantages of having an architect on the team are many: they have the experience of seeing renovation projects through from beginning to end; have worked with many of the golf industry professionals who may need to consult on an aspect of the project (irrigation consultants and civil engineers, for example); and can be the non-member and non-staff neutral party who communicates about the project to members.

The communications role is particularly valuable, as projects that cost money can lead to contentious meetings. Removing staff and member volunteer leaders from the lightning rod position preserves their effectiveness after the project is completed.

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thorough assessment of a course's infrastructure and creating a plan for implementation of necessary maintenance and replacement will yield positive results and satisfied members. **BR**

Bobby Weed's professional career began with an apprenticeship under Pete Dye, an association that stretched for over 17 years. In 1983, Weed was hired by the PGA TOUR, where he advanced to become their in-house architect in 1987. From that post, Weed was responsible for the design of many of today's best known TPC venues, which continue as host sites for prominent TOUR events.

Today, Bobby Weed Golf Design has amassed an impressive list of accomplished courses that are consistently ranked at the top of their respective categories. Bobby Weed Golf Course Design is headquartered in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. and can be reached through the website: www.bobbyweed.com.

HIRE CONSULTANTS OR TACKLE IN-HOUSE



A S G C A
Past President
Dr. Michael Hurdzan has overseen the renovation of dozens of golf courses. He has come up with a chart

Once it has been decided that a project is necessary, it's appropriate to make this assessment. The chart below, once completed, can point a club in the right direction. Determine the likelihood of each problem source that could be encountered during an in-house project by ranking it as "high," "medium" or "low." If your total score is 15 or less, do it yourself. If it is 16 to 20, try to lower the risk of examining your weaknesses and correcting them. If your score is 21 or more, contract it out.

Determining whether to do a project "in-house" or "out-source" must

remain an individual decision. I would advise anyone that unless they have had substantial experience in the anticipated work and working conditions, it is best to hire established experts.

An internationally recognized authority on golf course environmental issues, Dr. Michael Hurdzan, ASGCA Past President, studied turf management at Ohio State University and earned a Masters degree in landscape architecture and a Ph.D. in environmental plant physiology at the University of Vermont.

His golf course architecture firm, Hurdzan/Fry Environmental Golf Design is headquartered in Columbus, Ohio. www.hurdzanfry.com.

ASGCA has a number of resources to assist clubs in the remodeling/reconstruction/restoration process, including "The Golf Course Remodeling Process: Questions & Answers" and "Golf Course Items: Expected Life Cycle." Visit the ASGCA website at www.asgca.org to download brochures and other free publications and learn more about the seminar "Remodeling University: A Short Course to a Better Course."

that will help clubs assess whether a job should be handled with existing staff or contracted out. This chart is taken from an article in the "Remodeling University Handbook," a supplement to ASGCA's Remodeling University seminar.

SOURCE OF PROBLEM	HIGH 3	MEDIUM 2	LOW 1
Unskilled work crew mistakes			
Improper installation equipment			
Insufficient installation equipment			
Inexperienced in problem recognition			
Extended installation period			
Workman compensation claims			
Improper irrigation functioning			
No guarantee of workmanship			
Perhaps no product warranty			