rounding vegetation theme and have favorable characteristics. Fast-growing trees and trees with large fruit are usually not good candidates for golf courses because they often have invasive surface root systems or require frequent cleanup.

Also, try to limit the selection of different species to a reasonable number. A continuous vegetation theme is often the trademark of many of America's highest-ranked courses. For example, Medinah Country Club, the site of the 1990 U.S. Open, is noted for its oak trees throughout the property.

Tip Number 9. Try to naturalize the appearance of large tree plantings by randomizing the distance between each tree. A good way to do this is to hit several dozen golf balls into a rough area from a distance of about 200 yards. At the landing site of each golf ball place a small flag, and then selectively remove one flag at a time until there is an appropriate number left. Be sure to leave enough space between trees to accommodate your mowing equipment.

Tip Number 10. Never plant more than the maintenance staff can adequately maintain. During the first year of establishment, small trees require extra attention and regular hand-watering during the summer. If trees must be purchased in large numbers, it is best to establish a nursery near the maintenance facility where they can be properly cared for. Then, over the next several years, gradually transplant them throughout the course.

In developing a tree planting plan for a golf course, it is important to recognize that what makes your course different from a park or your own front yard is the importance of the quality of the turf in relation to the playing of the game of golf. Trees can play many useful roles on golf courses, but when overplanted and misused they can cause turf maintenance problems and detract from the appearance and playability of the course. Don't let trees overwhelm your golf course.

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

WHAT'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE?
An Opinion on Unreasonable Expectations

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GOLFERS are well known for making comparisons. They seem to take pride in telling anyone who will listen how a course down the road does something this way or that. They compare budgets, acreage maintained, soils, grass types, green speed, the amount of labor, and many other facts. Sometimes the comparisons are accurate, sometimes not.

Let's take this comparison one step further. It's not really valid, but it is interesting nonetheless.

Baseball: A .250 batting average is just that — an average. A ball player hits safely one at-bat in four. A "star" bats .300, and an immortal like Ted Williams bats .400. If you are keeping score, and you should be, that's four out of ten.

Basketball: Superstars shoot just over 50% from the field. They shoot a ball into a hoop at a distance of zero (a dunk) to 18-22 feet or more.

Golf: A par round of golf is normally about 72. Golfers who consistently shoot less than par are found on the PGA Tour, making lots of money. Golfers who shoot consistently over par are found everywhere, and includes those people making the comparisons. The average handicap in the country is just over 18. The average golfer, therefore, shoots about 25% over par.

At what percentage do golf course superintendents produce quality turfgrass? As a basis for comparison, golf courses contain about 30 acres of fairways, 2.5 acres of greens, and 2.5 acres of tees. This equates to about 100,000 sq. ft. of greens and tees and 1,320,000 sq. ft. of fairways. Thus, if a superintendent "bats" .400, which would put him in great company in baseball, it means your superstar would lose the equivalent of 10.8 greens and tees out of 18. On fairways, he would lose about 18 acres of turf.

While this .400 batting average might get you into the Baseball Hall of Fame, you would probably lose your job as a golf course superintendent.

All of this may sound ludicrous, but the fact remains that golfers have set such high standards for their golf courses that maintaining these standards is difficult, expensive, and sometimes impossible to achieve. To keep alive every blade of grass on every green, tee, and fairway regardless of the conditions, and not being willing to accept anything less, is wishful thinking and a mistake.

Everything cannot be perfect on every golf course every day. Even if it were possible, what would it cost?

So, look at your golf course. My message to course officials reading this opinion is not to be so concerned if the golf course superintendent bats only .998. After all, this equates to losing about 200 sq. ft. of turf, a 10 ft. by 20 ft. area of greens or tees and 2,640 sq. ft. of fairways, or .06 of an acre.

Anyone who bats this percentage or better deserves a pat on the back, not a kick in the pants. After all, what other industry which deals so closely with Mother Nature can boast a 99% average or better? Not many.

Therefore, the next time you read about a professional athlete making $2,000,000 a year to achieve only a 30% batting average, be proud . . . because golf course superintendents are batting 99%, or better.