

# THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

## ***I. Thou Shalt Seek Out Objective Analysis***

If you really want to know where you stand regarding the condition of your golf course, bring in an objective, outside evaluator, such as the USGA Turfgrass Advisory Service (TAS) for a full day's visit. Consultation with knowledgeable, objective experts will save months of research and avoid guesswork. Arm yourself with the facts before proceeding further. The key issue is: Do you need to do anything, and if so, what?

## ***II. Thou Shalt Educate Committees***

Make sure the Green Committee participates in all meetings with outside professionals, including all TAS visits. They can't do their job without knowing the status of the golf course and how to address diagnosed problems.

## ***III. Thou Shalt Educate the Golfers***

Course remodeling can be an emotional issue, and it may take time to make the golfers fully aware of problems that have been diagnosed. Go slowly, pay attention to everyone's varied concerns, and be sensitive to the fact that many golfers may not at first appreciate the seriousness of the problem. Give them time. Proceed golfer by golfer, talking to people on an individual or small group basis.

## ***IV. Thou Shalt Develop a Plan and Stick To It***

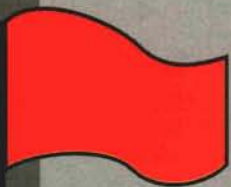
If the data support some form of remodeling or renovation, don't ignore the problem and, equally important, don't rush to cry out, "Let's remodel!" Decide what is needed, develop a realistic plan to accomplish specific goals, and make every attempt to finance the work without having the price become the main issue. Before submitting a plan, know the scope of the work, the true cost, and a realistic schedule.

## ***V. Thou Shalt Understand the Economies of Scale***

Keep in mind that it may be most efficient to do all the needed work at one time, rather than spreading it out over several years. A course can achieve substantial savings by having one crew and a single deployment of equipment. There also can be sizeable savings through *bulk buying* when it comes to purchasing the various supplies needed to do the job. If there are related tasks the golf course is contemplating (improvements to the sprinkler system, new irrigation pipes, etc.), consider doing the work at the same time as the remodeling job so as to minimize the inconvenience to the golfers. The only thing worse than having your golf course torn up is having it torn up more than once.

## ***VI. Thou Shalt Select a Cohesive Project Team to Do the Work and a Small Committee to Oversee It***

Make every effort to have a cohesive team in place. If the architect you select has a preferred contractor, give that recommendation serious consideration. Price may be a factor here, but consider that having a team working together — rather than one beset with internal friction — will likely save money in the long run and, more important, produce a superior end product. In addition, have a small committee oversee the project. No orchestra ever played a symphony with multiple conductors twirling the baton at the same time, and no remodeling job ever succeeded with an army of armchair architects "supervising" the real architect. Use the committee as the interface between the





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architect, contractor, and the golfers. While opinions from knowledgeable golfers about playing conditions and potential changes in course design can be helpful, they should be filtered through the committee, rather than having the architect and contractor besieged by *golfers' input* during the job.

## **VII. Thou Shalt Respect Mother Nature**

Realize that seasons change and so does the weather. Winter is not a good time for heavy construction work (rain is a four-letter word to golf course contractors). Anyone reseeding needs to give the grass enough time to *grow in* before the rainy season arrives. While no one can predict the weather, careful planning can allow the work to be done during the spring, summer, or fall — during a dry period and a good growing season — when earth moving can be done easily and efficiently, and the grass can be in place before trouble (in the form of rain) arrives. While this may entail cutting into the course's *busy season* and the remodeling work may result in some loss of revenue, in the long run it will be an advantage to have new fairways, bunkers, and greens in place with the grass *rooted* before the rains come.

## **VIII. Thou Shalt Be Reasonable With Respect to the Difficulties of the Job**

Understand that there will be unforeseeable events. The contractor may encounter bad weather, unmarked utility lines, and so forth. Make every effort to anticipate these items and arrange for underground services to be marked ahead of time, but keep in mind that the unexpected can and will occur. No job is perfect, but the more reasonable people are about seeing the task through to completion, the better off everyone will be.

## **IX. Thou Shalt Keep Thy Golfers Informed**

At most courses, even the *naysayers* eventually come to support the project. The key to producing a turnaround is informing everyone, including the doubters, and keeping them informed as the job moves forward. Take golfers on tours of the course and show them the work in progress, explaining how the greens are being built and how the new drainage system beneath the greens and bunkers is being installed. They can see for themselves how substantial the improvements are and how efficiently the contractor is proceeding to complete the job. One tip worthy of note: If possible, have the contractor complete the areas visible from the dining room first, so visitors can see the progress, rather than be constantly exposed to plowed dirt. And note: Make sure your golfers know what to expect once the job is done; perhaps the greens will be slow at first, and maybe there will be some plugged lies in bunkers. For an excellent reference, see "Avoiding the Hazards of Golf Course Renovation," *Green Section Record*, July/August 1995.

## **X. Thou Shalt Make Arrangements for Golfer Play During Construction**

One of the biggest problems is making sure golfers can play golf while the remodeling work is ongoing. This can be done by making arrangements with neighboring courses or by constructing first-class temporary tees and greens within the existing golf course. Note: The issue of providing access to golfing facilities is especially important for older golfers, who may feel their course is being taken from them during their *last years* of being physically able to play. Aside from helping them understand that their present-day sacrifice will provide for their grandchildren, it helps to accommodate their needs so they not only can watch the future being built, but play their way into it at the same time.

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