

Customized Posting

Postings for riding cart usage are customized for each hole.

BY BOB BRAME

When and where carts can be used are very often controversial issues at golf courses throughout the country. It is common for usage posting to be strategically located at the first and tenth tees. This approach addresses the entire course, or at least nine holes, as a package. If one or two holes are such that carts cannot be used, the most common default is for the posting to reflect the weak links, even though cart usage may not be a problem on a majority of the holes. Recognizing that stopping or restricting cart usage is often virtually the same as closing the course, customized postings address this shortfall by treating each hole individually and thereby enhancing management flexibility.

Make sure it has been clearly established who will make the final decision about cart usage. At most facilities this responsibility falls to the course superintendent. Who else can better determine damage potential? Input from other key individuals like the golf professional, manager, committee chairs, and an owner is important, but someone must weigh all the issues and make a decision. The value of the course is directly tied to ongoing maintenance. Since cart usage can, at times, compromise maintenance efforts, the logical choice is for the superintendent to administer cart usage and any needed posting.

The first step toward customized posting is the proper placement of a sign on each hole. In most cases, placement should be at the tee and situated so that the sign hangs perpendicularly to the cart path or the flow of traffic. When there are multiple tees, central



Cart usage for this hole is clearly posted and can be adjusted/changed quickly and easily to accommodate conditions.

placement normally works best. Extended tee complexes may require more than one sign per hole. Each sign should be printed on both sides so that it can be read when approaching or when looking back. It should not be possible to miss a sign when playing from any one of the tee surfaces.

Cart usage options will need to be decided upon and 18 signs, printed on both sides, made up for each alternative. There should be no hole numbering on any of the signs so that they can be mixed and matched throughout the course. The most common package of usage options is:

- Carts scatter,
- Carts on paths only or carts in deep rough only, and
- One cart crossover per hole.

The combination of options may vary, depending upon a course's specific

needs or limitations. Once the usage option package is determined, maintain continuity so that players will become familiar with the policy.

During course setup each morning, the grounds staff, with approval from the superintendent, should review conditions and then display the appropriate posting for each hole. At times, all holes may be posted the same. However, there may be other times when a mix of all posting options exists — implemented appropriately throughout the course. The proper customized postings will guard turf quality, while allowing maximum flexibility for cart usage and potentially speeding play.

Customized posting is not overly confusing to players, but communicating to players the necessity of checking cart usage signs at each hole is vital. In reality, it is a simple concept and golfers will better accept the need to stay on paths or in the deep rough on certain holes if they know that random scattering may be allowed on others. Posting on each hole also will avoid the tendency of players to forget the policy, a limitation or excuse that is common when there are only one or two postings for the entire course.

While riding carts have become an integral part of American golf, their usage must be monitored and controlled if turf quality and course playability are to be maintained at a high level. Cart usage flexibility, pace of play, and income must also be considered, and customized posting covers all of the above.

Author's Note: Mike O'Connell, CGCS, superintendent at the Maketewah Country Club in Cincinnati, Ohio, is the source of this turf tip on customized posting.

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