

G the green side of If

Don't look now but even golf courses are going green! When the word "golf" is mentioned, most of us already envision groomed fairways, immaculate putting surfaces, and an overall respectful use of a local natural area. We can now take that image to a new level – an eco level.

Traditionally, in order to comply with many regulations governing land use, golf courses have had to be ecologically responsible from their conception. Beyond that responsibility, most are now venturing forward with an even greater green purpose. Examples can be seen in all aspects of the operation of a course. To the casual observer, several indications of a green focus are obvious, but some examples may require further digging. As a matter of fact, digging at a few courses may uncover a few surprises! At this time, there are several courses (either in development or in the planning stages) that have a reclaimed landfill site as their base. This latest concept further emphasizes the importance of waste reduction, recycling, and proper disposal of hazardous materials. The ultimate use of reclaimed landfill that provides for personal recreation and a natural wildlife habitat is essentially a complete eco circle.

Beyond the hidden base of some golf courses, there are plenty of obvious signs of a green movement on local fairways. Many courses have moved away from gas-powered (high emission) carts to using more efficient rechargeable battery vehicles. A growing number of courses are now providing score cards, supported by local businesses, printed on recycled paper.

Promotional marketing is also playing a role in the greening of golf courses. Many locations now offer biodegradable tees, recycled paper pens, plus many styles of clothing that have recycled and/or natural fabric content. At tournaments, reusable non woven lunch bags are currently a favourite form of packaging for presenting golfers with their gifts (balls, a towel, snack bar, etc.) for the day. As well as being kept and reused, for corporate partners, non woven lunch bags provide a wonderful opportunity for event sponsorship.

Some courses have even gone so far as refusing to sell individual bottles of water. At those courses, as part of a paid greens fee, patrons receive a personal water bottle that they can refill at any of the several watering stations located around the course. Upon completion of their round, golfers simply take their reusable bottle home. Much like recent initiatives at local coffee shops, if the golfers return at a later date with their bottle (which is easily stored in, or clipped onto their golf bag) then they do not need to buy a new bottle and are offered a reduced green fee.

In every sense, these are all welcome initiatives. The greens are indeed getting greener!



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