

Priming the Workshop over Winter



Winter allows mechanics to catch up on many jobs neglected during summer

While winter affords the golf course superintendent the opportunity to catch up on matters neglected during a busy summer, winter can be just as productive a time for the golf course mechanic. Here, Mark Browne from the Eastern Golf Club in Melbourne takes a tour around the shed and compiles an essential winter checklist every mechanic should go through to ensure the workshop is in prime shape to tackle the new season.

If I can borrow a paragraph from the Textron workshop and service manuals of all their machinery on preventive maintenance, it states, "Preventative maintenance is maintenance performed to prevent malfunction and parts breakdown by periodically and

systematically checking equipment and its systems. Preventative maintenance will cut back corrective maintenance."

This excerpt not only applies to the maintenance of machinery but also to many other tasks in the golf course mechanic's day-

to-day work. The following article examines areas where the golf course mechanic can stay one step ahead of managing golf course equipment and its maintenance.

Winter time on the golf course allows mechanics to catch up on many jobs that sometimes are overlooked or deferred because of other priorities during the peak growing season, when keeping ahead of things can be sometimes demanding. With the wetter, cooler months coming, mechanics can take stock of what they need to accomplish so that they can be back in full swing by the coming spring.

An important part in running a workshop, but one which is often overlooked, is the upkeep of handtools. Sometimes we can neglect the replacement of such. A damaged or worn open end spanner or ring spanner can be dangerous and skinned knuckles are not a welcome feeling on a cold winter's morning.

Cracked or worn sockets should be immediately discarded as these can be quite dangerous. What about that pair of side cutters that no longer cuts strips of wire efficiently and the combination pliers with the damaged jaws that no longer grips properly? These need to be replaced.

Power tools should all be checked for damaged leads and replaced if necessary. While on the topic, what about those extension leads? Check them over and make sure they are serviceable and safe.

While we're in the workshop, let's check over the mig welder. Blow out the dust from around the cooling fan. Check for worn parts making sure the wire feed is working properly and that there are replacement welding tips because it's going to get a good workout for those welding jobs and small projects that will need attending to over the winter months.

Another workshop initiative is to take account of which oil, air, fuel and hydraulic filters we need to stock up on for spring. Oils, lubricants and greases are other items that should be purchased in readiness for servicing, making sure there is enough hydraulic oil in stock when the transmission oil in larger machinery such as tractors needs changing.

Are there enough bedknives for the greens and tees and fairway mowers? Now is the time to redress those bedknives that are still serviceable but sitting under the bench.

Staying under the bench, how about throwing out those old bearings and nuts and bolts from those rollers overhauled in recent months and those old parts that seem to take up so much space. And while we're at it, order some new blades for the rotary mowers.

Have a look through the parts storage bins. Why do we keep parts for machines we no

longer have? Get rid of them! Or find someone who needs them; don't let them just take up unnecessary space.

Once the workshop is up to scratch and spick and span, let's go over to the air compressor. Is this one of the most neglected items in the workshop? Drain and refill the hydraulic oil, remove and clean the air filter, drain the tank, check the drive belt, re-tension the cylinder head, and check the hoses and fittings for serviceability - it will appreciate the extra attention.

Another overlooked item is the old faithful two-stroke engine used on brushcutters and walk behind mowers. If these are not to be used for sometime, drain the fuel tank and fuel bowl and blow out the filter.

I have seen two-stroke fuel turn to 'clag' after sitting for long periods blocking filters and the internals of carburettors. This becomes another unnecessary job to rectify come the first time these are to be used in the spring.

Hydraulic hoses and fittings are another important maintenance item. We can visually inspect a number of these on reel mowers and tractors and replace where necessary. The hoses

more exposed to the elements and around reel motors seem to cop a little more damage and with steel braiding exposed, it won't be long before they start leaking or blow completely. So a call to the local 'hose doctor' should be high on the list to have these replaced.

Winter is also a good time to catch up on servicing of machines that only get used seasonally. Topdressers, verti-drains, aerators and spray units should all be looked over for potential problems.

Changing gear box oils, lubricating cables and linkages and greasing of rollers and bushes will have them in top condition for the next time they are required. An application of CRC or WD40 on exposed and unprotected metals also helps stop surface rust from accumulating on these when they are sitting around for long periods.

If cylinders are to be re-ground, try and organise to get in early with your preferred grinder so your machine is not out of action for too long; sometimes they may have a backlog of cylinders to grind through the winter. Make sure you have the right bedknives to give them if you're using genuine ones.

Batteries are another important but overlooked item, as on some machines they are out of sight and out of mind under floor covers and exposed to a mixture of grass clippings, water and fertilisers which create a corrosive effect on terminals. To counteract this, clean and hose thoroughly and spray terminals with terminal protector to help with the starting process on cold winter mornings.

The slight oil leak on a machine that's not getting any better and has been on the agenda to be repaired can also be covered over the winter months.

In summary, winter can be a very productive and busy time for the golf course mechanic as an abundance of challenging work can be undertaken and achieved.

Tools to the ready guys, there's no time to lose! 🛠️

Acknowledgements

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