

Golf Digest[®]

AUGUST 2009



edited by RON KASPRISKE

HARNESSING THE SUN An increase in utilities and a desire to help protect the environment are what prompted Sebonack Golf Club in Southampton, N.Y., to convert its golf-cart fleet to solar power. Sebonack superintendent Garret Bodington installed solar panels on top of each of the club's 40 electric carts (\$2,700 per cart), creating golf's version of a hybrid vehicle. "We can get through an entire day on sun power, and the battery might need an electric charge of just an hour or so at night—even on cloudy days," he says. "It used to be six or seven hours of charging. We're a private course with a small fleet, but for a public course that uses its carts for 36 to 45 holes a day, the electricity savings could be huge." The panels could also double the life of a cart's battery, Bodington says, making it even more environmentally friendly. Several companies make solar-conversion kits. Sebonack got its panels from a Danish company called SolarDrive, through a partnership with Club Car, an Augusta, Ga., cart manufacturer. Sebonack's owner, Michael Pascucci, learned about the solar panels from his friend Ernie Els, who has a solar-powered cart. The panels, which fit on the cart's roof, weigh about 30 pounds and are resilient but not shatterproof. —RK