Panoramic view of Merrywood Ski Area is shown above, taken from unload area of intermediate slope looking toward clubhouse.

Rope tow runs from tow hut at bottom of hill around pulleys mounted on poles, left. Note lights and power lines at top of poles, also snow pipe laid beside poles.

Shown below is schematic drawing of Merrywood Ski Area. Novice slope is practice tee in golf season, intermediate, part of 18th fairway. Trails are not covered by artificial snowmakers.
By switching from golf to skiing in winter, Smithtown Landing CC keeps its cash registers ringing all year round.

By DESMOND TOLHURST

Winter snow brings its own special problems to the majority of northern clubs: closing or at least cutting down the clubhouse facilities; closing the course; letting seasonal labor go with the attendant problems of re-hiring next spring, etc. However, snow need not be an enemy. The happy marriage of skiing to golf at Smithtown Landing CC, Long Island, N.Y. proves that a solid program of winter sport can keep the clubhouse going under a full head of steam, with few if any layoffs.

The club was built in 1960 on the former Gobel estate. Comprising 188 acres of land, it is owned by Arthur E. Poole, president, Hallen Construction Co., who immediately set out to make the club the most comprehensive recreational and sporting facility possible.

Smithtown Landing has an 18-hole championship course which encircles a 9-hole Par-3 layout. It also has three swimming pools, two clay competition tennis courts, and work has begun on a Marina near the clubhouse designed to link up with the Nissaquogue River and Long Island Sound.

Beside these more usual pursuits at a country club, Mr. Poole envisaged adding a ski facility to complement the summer activities. In the summer of 1962, therefore, he called in Joe Maietta to be Managing Director of the new ski area. Maietta was the pioneer of ski operations on Long Island, and had successfully managed several areas during the previous four years.

"Usually when you start out," says Joe, "You start small and build from there. But in this case, Mr. Poole wanted a complete winter facility for the members of the club so we went ahead and built the whole Merrywood Ski Area in time for the 1962-3 season. (The original name of the club was Merrywood and the ski area has retained the name for identification by ski enthusiasts.)

"The practice ground became our novice slope and the adjoining 18th fairway, our intermediate slope. The former is 450 feet long, with a vertical drop of 40 feet. The latter has a vertical drop of 130 feet, and is 850 feet long.

"About the only addition we made the second year," says Joe, "was to cut out..."
some short ski trails to provide more challenge for our advanced skiers. To do this all we had to do was to cut down a few trees in the rough between the 18th and first fairways. The trails range from 950 to 1,600 feet in length.

"By the side of each slope we installed permanent electrically driven Poly Dac plastic woven rope tows. On the tow poles we installed lights to illuminate the slopes for night skiing—an idea I had used previously which makes separate poles for the lights unnecessary.

"On Long Island," says Maietta, "it's essential to have snowmaking equipment, as there just isn't enough free fall of snow to keep the slopes covered throughout the season. Mr. Poole and I therefore decided to put in snowmakers for the first season.

"The snowmaking pipes were laid alongside the rope line, so that snow was provided on which the skiers ride up. We have 15 outlets on each pipe, into
which 15 guns with hoses 75 feet long are fitted to cover the slopes. Each gun will cover up to 100 square feet, but to cover the wider intermediate slopes, two hoses are coupled together to double their effective ‘reach.’ However, I’d like to point out that this equipment can only be used when the temperature is below freezing.” (For detailed information on snowmaking, see GOLFDOM, February 1965.)

“At Merrywood,” says Joe, “we use Larchmont snowmaking equipment. They are the pioneers in the snowmaking business and proved most helpful to us in setting up this operation.

“One problem we had was the noise made by the diesel compressors, which are standard for snowmaking equipment, however, we licked it by enclosing them in soundproof huts.

“To pack the slopes after snowmaking,” says Maietta, “I use a Ski-Doo snowmobile. I also offer these vehicles for sale to our members.

“Our golf course superintendent, Bob Dunne, has no objections to our ski operation. There is so much nitrogen in the snowmaking mixture that the 18th fairway is always the first to come back each spring. The snowmaking operation on the practice tee (novice slope) greened up the bare ground so much that it encouraged him to put grass in that area far earlier than he had scheduled.”

The ski season at Merrywood is from about the end of December to the middle of March. Maietta aims to build up two to three feet of snow at the start of the season to prevent bare spots appearing on the slopes during Long Island’s “January thaws,” when the temperature goes up to around 65°. As soon as there is a major thaw in spring, he stops skiing cold—he does not consider it worthwhile extending the club’s ski season at the expense of golf.
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“One of the beauties of the operation here,” says Maietta, “is that there is no waste of labor. For instance, the grounds crew during the golf season become the ski crew in the winter. We have eight men who work alternate morning and afternoon shifts when we are making snow, and when we aren’t, they are available to do winter maintenance and repair the course equipment and other work under the supervision of Bob Dunne. Bob is not involved in our ski operation and schedules his vacation during the winter.

“Our clubhouse is ideally situated to take care of the needs of our skiers. It’s near the base of the intermediate slope (near the 18th green in the golf season) and is one of the reasons why Mr. Poole decided to expand the original house on that site into our present clubhouse. He envisaged a ski operation at Merrywood from the start.

“In the ski season,” says Joe, “we reserve what was the original house for our members’ use. This gives them a lounge and a small dining room and leaves the large addition Mr. Poole built, which includes a large dining room, a big horseshoe-shaped bar overlooking the slopes, and locker room, for the use of our skiers.

“Our house staff is another example of how the ski operation here complements the golf season,” Maietta points out. “Our chef and his kitchen staff, the Maitre D’ and the waitresses—all stay with us during the winter months. In fact, we still have the waitresses who started with us when the club opened.

“For the ski season, we turn the pro shop into a ski shop. (Pete Mazur, our professional, takes off to play the Winter Tour.) We stock the shop with ski equipment for sale and hire—such as skies, poles, boots, waxes, tow mittens, hats, goggles, etc. However, we don’t carry stretch pants, sweaters, and other apparel—I leave that to the stores.

“Even in my own position here,” says
A new book, *Advances in Agronomy, Vol. 18, 1966* (Academic Press Inc., New York), has just reached my desk. Among other things it contains some 60 pages of text and pictures under the heading “Turfgrass Management in the United States” by W. H. Daniel, Purdue, and E. C. Roberts, Iowa. This publication is another milestone in the progress of turfgrass management. It was just 20 years ago (1946) that we organized and held the first session on turf at the American Society of Agronomy meetings in Omaha—the first official recognition of turf by A.S.A.

This contribution is commendable in that it brings to the attention of the scientific world the present status of the turfgrass industry.—Fred V. Grau

Maietta, "I have complementary winter/summer duties. During the golf season, I am public relations director for the club. In winter, I direct the ski operation, and especially the snow-making, and also look after the ski shop."

The ski staff at Merrywood comprises 28 instructors whose work is scheduled by Ski School Director Frank Mazzola. Besides giving lessons, the instructors also supervise the tow booth and police the slopes. For example, they keep skiers from remaining in the base area, which is dangerous, and move them over to the tow line. They also prevent novices from attempting the intermediate slope.

All the instructors have other jobs besides working for the ski area, which fits in nicely with the hours the slopes are open.

Monday through Friday Merrywood is in operation from 4:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.,

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and Sundays and Holidays from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. "The schedule also dovetails with the needs of our members," Maietta points out. "This is our primary concern here, as the ski area was not envisaged as a commercial proposition, but as an added service for the club members.

"During the week, the fathers are at work while the kids are at school, with mother delivering kids to school, shopping etc. This is why we are open only during the late afternoon and evening from Monday through Friday. On the weekend, our members are more at leisure to enjoy the ski facilities.

"We did find, however, that the members by themselves could not support the ski operation," says Joe. "For this reason we do permit non-members to come and ski here, and have a special half-price program for the local kids from Monday through Friday.

"However, we have no intention of allowing the ski operation to lower the tone of the club. We don't allow bus groups or ski club groups here, as we have enough business from local residents and other people on Long Island who have heard of us through their friends. We can handle up to 500 people—and have no desire to attract more than we can comfortably handle.

continued on next page
"We reserve the right to refuse admission to any rowdies who would spoil the atmosphere—these people are politely told by our parking attendant that they are on private property and are requested to leave. At present, a member can leave his skies and poles propped up outside the clubhouse with no fear of theft—we want to keep it that way.

"Also in keeping with our policy of putting our members first," says Joe, "are the rates we charge. Non-members, for instance, pay $100 per family for a season—members pay half that amount."

During his successful management of the Merrywood Ski Area, Maietta has had many inquiries from clubs and towns wanting to start a ski program.

One of the clubs Joe advised is Baiting Hollow CC, also on Long Island. Here, the skiing is for members only and is on a smaller scale than at Merrywood. They have one ski slope, a permanent rope tow similar to that at Merrywood, with a snowmaking line with five guns. In lieu of a ski shop, one member buys basic ski supplies and sells them to other members.

"The initial investment for the Baiting Hollow club was very low, around $1,600," says Joe. "I helped them buy good used equipment, and they used their own pipe for the snowmaking line."

Another Long Island club Maietta helped get started is the Mill River CC. He has also answered inquiries from..."
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Nassau Country and the town of Babylon, even one from as far afield as the Ministry of Trade in Japan.

To the club which wishes to start a ski program Joe says: "It's almost impossible to give an estimate of the initial investment; $5,000 would be a good figure, but Baiting Hollow shows that it can be done for far less. It's really up to the club to decided how extensive a ski facility they want."

The following pointers will help you select your skiing slope. It should:
1. Be convenient to your clubhouse.
2. Have a power line readily accessible for lighting. In most cases the line can be run out from the clubhouse.
3. Have an adequate supply of water nearby for snowmaking.
4. Be of sufficient length—anything much shorter than 100 yards will not do. However, you can get away with a vertical drop of as little as 50 feet. If the slope is too shallow, you can undercut with a bulldozer near the top of the hill in order to give a steeper start to the run—this was done on the Merrywood novice slope.

"The first year, it's best to go easy," says Maietta, "Don't get overambitious. You must have a minimum of interest at your club to make it worthwhile." Here are some hints he gave for the first year's operation:

Form a Ski Club within the club and find out the degree of interest. Sports
Chicago Area Golf Car Seminar Big Success

Chicagoland Cushman Sales, Inc. staged the first of what is sure to become an annual seminar for the greater Chicago area's golf car fleet operators last Nov. 18.

Sound, practical planning by Frank Olivieri, Chicagoland's Cushman's sales manager, with talks by Attle Stephens, sales manager and Keith Page of Cushman Motors, kept the discussions buckled down to those questions most frequently asked about the selection, management and maintenance of car fleets. Among them: Type of Car, Buy or Lease, Profit Guidelines, Rounds Expected, Insurance and Lawsuits, Safety Education.

Value of the seminar was confirmed by more than 80 course officials, pros and managers voting for the event to be held annually and considerably more time provided for discussions.

participation figures show that usually only about 30 per cent of your members will want to ski as well as golf.

Get a portable tow which is powered by a gas engine. Place it near whatever water is available, and on a site from which you can expand.

Don't get snowmaking equipment the first year. Organize one-day ski trips to established ski areas, and aim to return to the club for dinner. When you get a free fall of snow on your slope you can then calculate the amount of interest at your club.

A novice slope is all you'll need the first season—after all 90 per cent of your club members are likely to be beginners. The second season is time enough to build an intermediate slope. This plan will also spread out the initial cost.

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