Figuring golf handicaps, long a much shunned task and the subject of endless buck passing on the average golf club's staff is rapidly succumbing to data processing techniques. Such applications to the other day-to-day operations of the club have been much slower, however.

Although computers, computer service bureaus, and data processing systems are fast becoming the workhorses of the business world they have yet to really take hold in the club industry. There has, in fact, been a noticeable resistance to them.

Listen to a few of the comments from the traditionalists:

"Too expensive."
"Members won't accept it."
"OK in business maybe, but it can't be applied to clubs."
"We're too small; in a few years, perhaps."

The truth is that it's not a matter of "whether" or "when", but how.

How can you, as the manager of a golf club, use this management tool today? How does it fit into your day-to-day operations?

Part of its problem in gaining acceptance is the need to put data processing in its proper perspective in the larger field of management information systems. Just as a portion cut steak is a part of the convenience foods picture so a unit record system is a part of your office information system.

And just as that portion cut steak will reduce food cost only when properly used in conjunction with other good cost control methods, so data processing is useful only as it can successfully retrieve, interpret and make meaningful information available to the club manager. This is the real intent of management information systems. Relieving the work load is, of course, a desirable and generally a realizable benefit, but it is not one that necessarily follows the installation of a data processing system.

In fact, if the reduction of labor costs is the primary reason for considering the installation of a data processing system a club would be wise to investigate the services your local bank or computer center can offer. This may well be the best answer.

It is certainly one that has worked well for Oak Ridge Country Club in Minneapolis and Paradise Valley Country Club in Phoenix. One uses a bank and the other a computer center to handle receivables and the payroll.

Payroll is probably the best place to begin cost comparisons of your present system with a computer operation. The time you spend on making up the payroll is easily identified and the cost can readily be checked against that quoted by your bank or computer center.

Handling receipt of payments on member's accounts is, perhaps, the next step. By changing your remittance address to a special Post Office box and authorizing your bank to pick up its contents you can accomplish the following:

Your bank will:
(1) Open the envelopes. (2) Sort and process the checks. (3) Deposit them to the club's account. (4) Deliver to the club all deposit slips and photostats of the checks for posting.

These two services are the basic means by which your bank or computer center can help you. You can go a bit further by adding your sales chits—food, bar, golf shop, locker room charges, etc.—to the service either by the direct delivery or by Dataphone.

This single, additional step will, in effect, take your entire accounts receivable department out of your office and into the bank.

It will mean that your bank will:
(1) Post charges to the member's account. (2) Bill him at the end of the month. (3) Give you a sales record department at the end of the month. Or on any given day if that is what you want.

You will also have eliminated the need for a considerable amount of equipment and the time needed to prepare and mail monthly statements. In addition your records will be secure.

Charges for this type of service are usually made by the unit, either on the basis of the number of chits or sales, or by the number of members and, in the case of payrolls, the number of employees. Some clubs with large memberships and a great many sales transactions have chosen to set up their own computer centers. Such a club is Kenwood Golf and Country Club of Washington D.C.

Kenwood makes use of an IBM 526 card punch, an 082 sorter, and a 402 alphabetical accounting machine. The equipment is versatile enough to perform the following functions:

Daily: Tabulate charge tickets
Summarize changes by department
Tabulate cash receipts
Monthly: Bill members
Summarize statements
Provide statistical reports on the membership.
Quarterly: Update membership lists.
Make Federal and State tax reports.

The system also enables the club to maintain completely current

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Club managers’ Continued

was the greatest thing to pass the
gullet of this gastronomic expert
since the invention of shredded
wheat cereal!"

Herb would probably have gone
as far as to say, "Why, a dinner
like this is your throat's way of
telling your ulcer to go to h... ."
It was indeed a memorable dining
experience, capped only by the
serving of a chocolate mousse to the
accompaniment of sliding walls
which revealed a dessert table
looking like the display from the
pastry chefs' of America.

Fifty billion calories vied for your
attention and competed for your
hand. While the dinner was an
etching on your memory of great
delights, the table appointments,
flowers, music and service made it
difficult to decide which was the
most outstanding.

Pete, ever hospitable, displayed
the generosity of his members by
giving what seemed to be an end-
less supply of door prizes to both
the men and the women. John
Cremers gave recognition to all of
the people in the audience who had
made the occasion possible, as
well as introducing various digni-
taries in the audience.

Dancing, conversation and pleas-
antries filled the evening until it
was time to again board the wait-
ing busses and take the starlit
drive back to the beckoning lights
of New York City. Our day had
come to a close.

management Continued

membership files, to age accounts,
and to mail members' statements
within five days after cutoff date.

It is interesting to note that in-
stallation of the system did not
reduce staff. Instead it created a
new problem—that of finding a
competent operator for the ma-
chines. A factor to be considered
by any club thinking about such an
installation. The equipment rents
for about $400 a month, with punch
cards and paper an added cost.

Obviously, so extensive a system
can be used by only the larger
country clubs. Kenwood is a club
with well over 2000 members and
their accounting department often
handles as many as 18,000 trans-
actions a month. Smaller clubs
would be well advised to look into
equipment with a smaller capacity
before committing themselves to
any system.

Some clubs, in fact, must start
with very basic equipment invest-
ments. Many small golf clubs are
still doing their accounting man-
ually. In order to install a really
useful management information
system such clubs must start by
carefully evaluating their existing
forms, statements, sales chits, pur-
chase orders, and even the means
by which they keep their members
informed of club activities.

Such an evaluation was recently
completed at Plum Hollow Golf
Club in Southfield, Mich., where
manager James McWorter has re-
cently begun installation of an elec-
tronic accounting and computing
system based on the NCR 395.

When fully operational it is es-
timated that the system will:

(1) Provide mechanized, error-
free bookkeeping with improved,
permanent records and a detailed
monthly statement.

(2) Save a minimum of 50 per
cent of the time formerly spent
in preparing payroll, accounts re-
ceivable, and accounts payable.

(3) Save at least 8 to 10 days in
preparing tax reports.

(4) Enable the club to even out
the workload of accounting.

(5) Eliminate much of the season-
al part-time help.

One attraction of the NCR 395
for Plum Hollow, in addition to its
accounting and computing ability,
is that it readily adapts to punched
cards and tape and can produce
cost control data, reports, journal
and ledger, entries and checks.

More sophisticated machines are,
of course, available and they will
be able to retrieve more infor-
mation. They also cost more
money. However, if machine limit-
ations must be set they are better
set in terms of information re-
served rather than dollar cost.

It is how much information you
need and how much you can use
even more than expense that should
be the determining factor.