

How Managers Are Bearing Up

A GOLFDOM survey of managers nationwide shows most are standing above the deluge of problems posed by energy shortages, although some are on tip-toe. Here are tips managers suggest for weathering the "energy crisis"

by STEPHEN W. BYERS

Of club managers responding to GOLFDOM's country-wide, random survey on the impact of the now highly controversial "energy crisis," 85 per cent reported no significant debilitation in their club operation that could be attributed to fuel price increases and shortages. That 15 per cent of the respondents bitterly complained of green fee revenue virtually drying up, construction bottlenecked by inadequate material availability and half deliveries of essential dining room supplies, such as linen, food and liquor, indicates that the shortages have not had a graduated effect. It's "no problem" or "a disaster."

FAT IN THE CITY, OR THE
PROVINCIAL BLUES

The embattled 15 per cent were invar-

ably managers of clubs unfortunately located in remote areas not surrounded by condominiums or other housing developments with memberships sparsely scattered over large areas and resorts positioned outside normal public transportation routes.

"We're not only out of the way for easy access to public transport, but our members live over a 30 mile radius from the club," reports one Floridian resort manager, "and there don't seem to be any areas comprising enough member residences to make car pooling a feasible alternative to not playing golf here."

Managers of clubs isolated from their purveyors suffered the most from spotty deliveries of essential supplies. An exasperated D. Fletcher, manager of the Birmingham CC in Alabama, is

still smarting from an interminable wait on linen delivery; when the order finally arrived it was only half of his request. He added that all his suppliers were cutting back on delivery frequency.

HOW TO COPE IF THE CRUNCH
GETS CRUNCHIER

Although most club managers seem skeptical of the far-reaching detrimental effects of the "energy crunch" predicted by Government officials, most are either already implementing conservation measures (particularly those rudimentary ones suggested by the Government) and revenue promotion plans or have such procedures under advisement in their club planning committees.

What follows is a distillation of the

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best tips offered by managers for solving current and anticipated energy related problems:

- **Cement relations with suppliers.** Try to get a commitment from them that will assure you a high delivery priority. Offer to pay them on delivery instead of waiting for a bill, at least until the gas "crunch" subsides. Bob Stanley, manager of the Mill River CC on Long Island, has not noticed much fluctuation in club revenue or suffered from supply deficiencies. "I've dealt with the same suppliers for many years and they've assured me a high delivery priority regardless of what happens," he says. Stanley also stated that his membership is not rooted in luxury and that the small sacrifices thus far asked of them have not been disturbing.
- **Ask purveyors to keep you informed of their continuing projections on delivery capacity.** This helps avoid the possibility of being left with no alternatives because you had no lead time knowledge of delivery cutbacks. A Delray Beach, Florida, club manager stated that because he was forewarned by his purveyors of cuts in delivery frequency, he was able to double his order for each delivery and obviate any supply shortage. "The only items, I've found in short supply," he says, "were beans and toilet paper."
- **All clubs should turn down their thermostats to 68 degrees and the air conditioners to half power, as Government officials have requested.** Informed members know already that the slightly lower temperature is healthier. "When I get complaints about the cooler club rooms," says a Virginia country club manager, "I refer them to any of several fellow members who are doctors to explain to them the therapeutic value of living in 68 degree atmosphere versus 72."
- **Close off rooms that get infrequent use.** Most managers told GOLFDOM that at least 25 per cent of their available floor space was not used. One midwestern manager says he cut heating oil consumption by 30 per cent in January by closing the large doors separating the dining room from the 10,000-square-foot comprising the club's recreation lounge. He then cut the heat in this large area to 60 degrees. "People use the lounge as much as ever," he says. "They rally around the fireplace, roasting marshmallows and hot dogs supplied by the dining

room." He also advocates closing doors leading to long hallways and cutting heat from hall vents.

A midwestern club administrator says, "Even after closing off the ladies' card room, I still find it half full of besweated bridge enthusiasts two or three days a week." Another manager noted that heat from the large pizza oven (pizza is a dining room specialty there) and from another large stove permitted the closing of heat vents in the kitchen five hours a day.

- **Use electric light bulbs with lower wattages.** Many managers stated they have reduced over-all light bulb wattage by 50 per cent.
- **Meet with employees and alert them of your interest in any energy saving ideas.** Instruct them to watchdog any unnecessary use of electricity.
- **Keep your membership abreast of your current and expected energy problems.** Appraise them of steps you plan to take before you take them to avoid time consuming piecemeal complaints. It is important to explain how your conservation plans will help. Most members will want to do their part even if it means a small reduction in club comforts and services when they see how much difference their small sacrifices can make.

"My members do not feel any hardship in turning on club lights when they need them and turning them off when they've finished," says a Long Island club manager, "most of them are used to the procedure from doing it at home."

A North Carolina club manager confessed that many of the good ideas for energy conservation had come from astute observations from members at weekly sessions devoted to the threatened energy problem. "Some of my members are in the oil business one way or another and offered to guarantee any short term shortages we might suffer in the next crucial months," he says.

- **Check with universities and newspapers to find local energy experts who might be available to speak at your club.** His suggestions could help the club through the "crunch" and his observations could be highly informative in general.
- **Prepare your members for a slightly less manicured golf course due to less watering and grass cutting.** If you are in the process of becoming more heavily automated hold off until the end of the "crunch" is in sight.

● **Some gasoline-strapped clubs with both electric- and gas-powered golf cars report that they are offering the electric cars for use first.** "Four days a week only half my fleet is in use," says a Florida resort manager, "and most of those are electric cars. Of course we use our gas cars if we need them, but we try to put out the electric units first."

● **Cut the use of ornamental lights.** Eileen Goodman, manager of Coral Ridge CC in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, admits to no significant problems directly associated with the energy crisis, because club members primarily live within walking distance of the club and because the gas shortage has curtailed member vacation travel. Even so, she says they have taken the standard precautions recommended by the Government in addition to shutting down their 27 high-wattage floodlights that formerly highlighted their scenic royal palms along the drive leading to the clubhouse.

● **Managers should aid in the formation of car pools and should investigate the possibility of minibus rentals to service the club exclusively.** F. Holzheimer, manager of the Fort Lauderdale G & CC, says his members have already started several motor pools in areas where 10 or 15 members live in proximity. Two Florida clubs recently purchased a minibus (seating 15) to service a 20 mile radius of both clubs. "If the energy crisis lasts just one year, the bus and driver expense will have paid off many times over," says one manager offering the service. He refused comment on the cost of the bus and driver's salary for one year.

● **Clubs maintaining swimming pools should prepare members for a discontinuance or a cut-back in pool use, unless CBS sources are overly pessimistic on predicted chlorine shortages.** The station announced January 28 that chlorine for public water purification was in short supply and that unless an affective way to step up chlorine production was found by next month, chlorine allocations for uses other than for municipal water purification would be severely limited until shortages were compensated.

● **Current club plans for large scale construction should be re-evaluated to reflect the predicted dearth of certain building materials containing such components as plastics and certain**

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chemicals in short supply.

● Some clubs are turning the "energy crisis blues" into an excuse for parties and other business stimulants. The manager of the Wilshire CC of Los Angeles has just thrown a successful party, which he tagged as the "Energy Crisis Candlelight Ball." Members brought their own candles (the only source of light for the affair). Ninety cent drinks and "energy crisis stew"

(priced at \$2.50 per person) were served, and the music probably emanated from nonelectrically powered instruments. Several other clubs reported they were using candles for many occasions and that their members loved the romantic atmosphere.

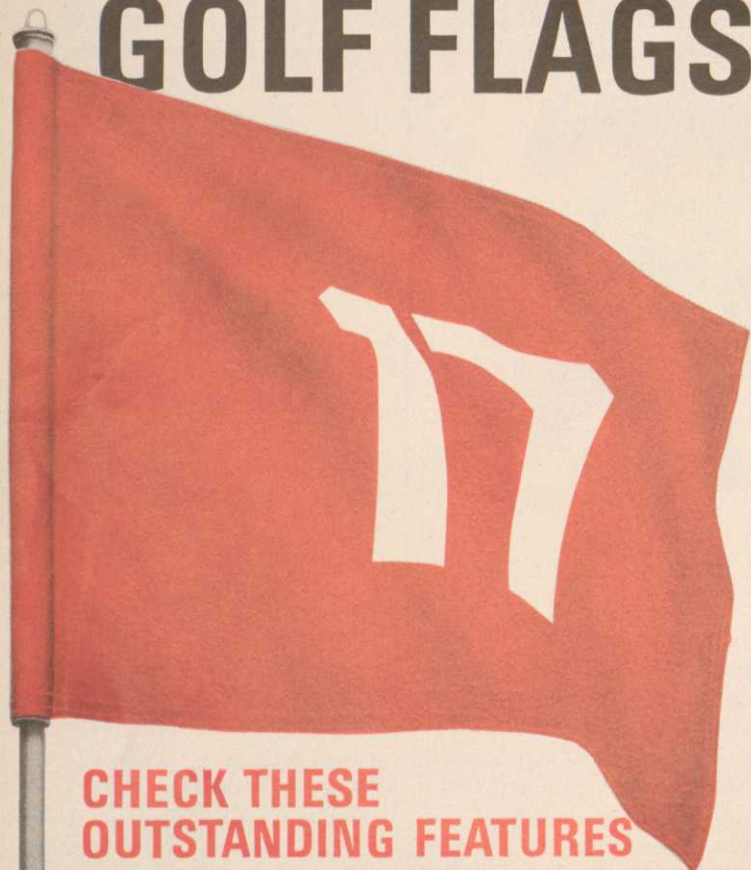
● Lowering green fees at special times worked to hype usually slow days at a few clubs, but some managers complained that this plan didn't offer them much benefit, because members

who were already playing golf regularly were switching to the discount days.

PROSPECTS

It may be a source of comfort to all those connected with the golf industry to know that, despite difficulty at the pumps, airline flight cut-backs, material shortages and general public wariness over the disputed present and future effects of the "energy crisis," Federal officials have assured GOLF-DOM that every effort will be made to fill golf club needs for fuel in the coming months. "This is true for all public recreational facilities because they are so important to people's morale," says one top government fuel authority. □

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MANAGER TIPS FOR WEATHERING THE ENERGY CRISIS

1. Cement relations with suppliers.
2. Request purveyors to keep you informed of their continuing projections on delivery capacity.
3. Comply with Government suggestions on energy conservation—i.e., turn down thermostats to 68 degrees and air conditioners to half power.
4. Close off rooms that get infrequent use.
5. Use electric light bulbs of lower wattages—ranging from 75 to 100.
6. Alert employees to your interest in energy savings ideas and have regular meetings to discuss their suggestions.
7. Keep membership abreast of your current and expected energy problems.
8. Invite energy experts to speak at club.
9. Prepare members for a less manicured golf course during the energy squeeze.
10. Cut use of ornamental lights.
11. Help form car pools and investigate minibus rentals.
12. Prepare members for cut in swimming pool usage due to chlorine shortage.
13. Curtail large-scale construction until materials in short supply are replenished.
14. Explore promotional ideas with energy crisis as the theme (see article).
15. Try discounting green fees on slow days.