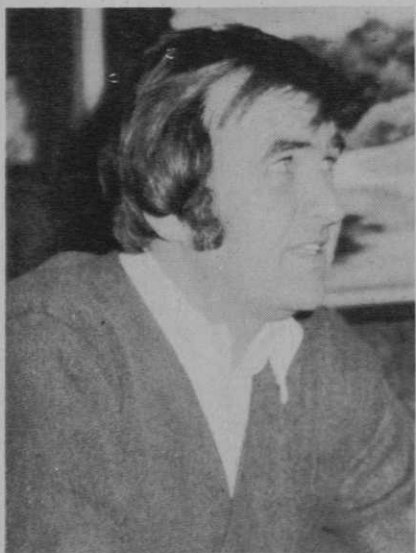




Superintendent John Jackman (above): Sees Open job not much different than any other year. Has budget of \$329,000 for 54 holes. Pro John Marschall (below): Carries standing inventory of \$120,000. Expects Open business to generate \$75,000 this year. Treats his shop like retail outlet in Chicago.



# The Majesty of Medinah

*How the Chicago-area course works and how it is handling itself for this month's 75th U.S. Open*

For most of its 50-year history, Medinah Country Club has served as the local mecca for Shriners in the region northwest of Chicago.

This month, the club will roll out its hospitality and host the 75th U.S. Open. The task of planning and preparing has indeed been great for Medinah, but after the TV trucks and galleries leave the grounds on the 22nd, life will go on.

In spite of all the work and frayed nerves that have been sacrificed for the Open, the men that make Medinah move on a day-to-day basis have kept their collective cools. Not a whole lot has changed this year for pro John Marschall,

superintendent John Jackman or general manager Burt Hams.

Massive might be the right word for the job of keeping Medinah's 656-acre physical plant in gear. For instance, the course has 54 holes that Jackman spends a yearly budget of more than \$329,000 on. Marschall operates a pro shop with 2,400 square feet and a standing inventory of \$120,000 and Hams' clubhouse generated \$350,000 in business in '74.

"We are a total service operation," says Hams, "Each person who joined the club, joined for a reason. It's our duty to cater to their needs." The needs of over 600 regu-

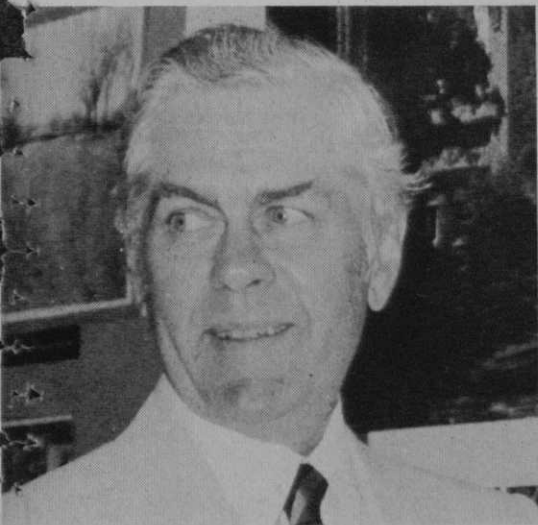
lar members and their families are met in a first-class fashion at Medinah every day.

Since the emphasis of the Open and golf is the top priority this year at the club, the role of the pro has been a bit more prominent. John Marschall seems up to the task, since it also includes the possibility of his playing in the Open.

"The whole thing is a dream come true. Every club pro hopes to have a tournament as big as the Open at his own course. Just to have it here is a real honor."

Currently in his eighth year at Medinah as head pro, Marschall has his shop primed for the added trade

The third on No. 3 (left): A look from the tee at the third hole on Medinah's championship course. Club President Paul L. Freter (below): Keeps close watch on club budgets. Happy with member involvement.



the Open offers. "I guess, we're shooting for about \$75,000 worth of business during the tourney," Marschall said surrounded by all the Open souvenirs in the shop.

Normally, Marschall has a full-time staff of four, but for the Open, the shop will have 20 handling the overflow of customers. Mike Harrigan, Gary Church, Bill Teresa and Judy Olsen are the full-time staff and all plan to continue on in golf business. Marschall's track record with assistants going on to head jobs has been good. Four of his nine assistants have gone on to top club jobs and there is always a list of young hopefuls waiting to get on at Medinah.

Marschall has adopted a lot of retail merchandising ideas for his operation and told GOLFDOM the key to success at a private club is to be a cordial salesman. "You have to be friends with the customers. A club pro has to have a pleasing personality and remember names. When people join a club like ours, it is fairly certain that you'll be dealing with them a long time," the Iowa native said.

Trial and error has been Marschall's formula of success. He admits the smart club pro has to gauge his buying habits toward the taste of his members. "Many of my members are close to 50-years-old. I think it's

easier to buy for men now than it was several years ago."

The men aren't the only ones with a wide variety of merchandise to choose from at the club. Marschall prides himself on his large selection of ladies apparel. It's not limited to just sportswear, either. Medinah offers cocktail clothes, panty hose and even a line of jewelry. "Nobody can say we don't try to please our members here. We have tried an awful lot of different merchandise," Marschall smiled.

Today, more than ever, Marschall realizes he's in direct competition with retail outlets for his customers' attention. "I try to run the shop like the stores in downtown Chicago. I go into them and look at their floor plans and displays, attempting to get ideas and adapting them to my operation. Fifty years ago, the pro was a teacher and club maker. In 1975, the pro has to be more than that and be a public relations man, too," Marschall pointed out.

At 37, Marschall is a stickler for personal contact with his membership. "You have to be concerned with your members' game first, instead of your own," he says, "A pro should be in his shop to service his members. You have to take care of their needs." Taking care of those needs is a full-time job for Marschall. Every year he puts up a sheet in the clubhouse offering members a chance to play with their pro. Within a few hours, the list is full for the year. "I don't care if a member has a 25 handicap or a three. It doesn't make any difference. I like the personal contact with them all," Marschall admits.

Promotions, seasonal sales and traditions are all part of the way Medinah's pro shop operates. Out of its present building, which went up in 1965, the shop is a focal point for the club. Such a well-visited place has got to keep up on different trends in the industry and Medinah's shop does. More than 120 different types of merchandise are stocked. Putters and wedges of all types are apparent and the shop markets more than 25 lines of clubs.

Breaking down his income in the shop, Marschall's greatest sales come in softgoods and gloves with 70 percent of total business here. Equipment sales and balls each bring in 15 percent.

Although, there are countless problems to contend with in the shop, Marschall still handles more than a 1,000 lessons a season plus a number of junior clinics. If that wasn't enough, he is also involved with Medinah's caddie program. The club has over 150 boys on its caddie list, 80 of whom are usually on duty for daily business which can often handle 550 rounds a day.

"All the caddies have to be ready for the Open. We've gotten uniforms for them and trained them to answer any possible question a golfer might ask. When the player asks how far it is from the bush to the edge of the green, the caddie will know," said the member of the Wilson advisory staff.

Even though, Marschall's job is a big one this or any other season, superintendent John Jackman probably has the toughest task of all at Medinah. With a modest air, Jackman says about the Open, "we haven't done things much different this year."

Jackman is a matter-of-fact man who admits he doesn't mind being called a "grasscutter." "I don't need a big title to do my job," said the 11-year veteran of Medinah, "I can do any job around this place." Jackman is a native of Indiana and went to Purdue University. After graduation, he landed his first job at a West Chicago course and a year later, in 1964, came to Medinah. He's been head superintendent since 1968.

"I probably know about as much about the course as anyone. But, I'm still learning," Jackman said leaning back in his chair. This year is not much different than any other. We haven't done too many things that we normally wouldn't do anyway."

For the 54-holes, Jackman's budget of \$329,000 has \$194,000 allocated for wages and the balance for everything else. Despite those figures, the 34-year-old superintendent has \$60,000 of his budget earmarked for the additional work of the Open.

"Believe it or not, the course will pretty much take care of itself," Jackman said. Although that might be true, Jackman's crew of 28 worked hard this spring on the No. 3 championship layout. There have been some additions to that already tough test of golf. Medinah has added 52 trees on No. 3 and if that

# Medinah continued

wasn't enough, 10 fairway and 16 green bunkers were tacked on.

Jackman was at last year's Open at Winged Foot, observing the work at Mamaroneck and digesting some of the criticism leveled on the course by contestants. He says he's ready to take on any comments by the touring critics.

"This course is not easy. Trees come into play on every hole. We didn't have to do anything to make this course any tougher. It already is. I don't think a pro has to shoot 25-under-par to be happy. A lot of the guys can be just as happy six or seven under," Jackman commented.

Even with all its inherent beauty, Medinah is not a spectators' course.

Medinah's Pro Shop: Covering over 2,400 square feet, Marschall's shop is one of the best stocked in the nation. A complete line of balls, clubs and bags are available along with sportswear and other items.

Unlike Augusta, there are no spectator mounds and only half the greens are elevated. With this in mind, Jackman has planted bluegrass in the rough to adjust for the tramping of the thousands following the tourney through the wooded course.

Three weeks before the start of the Open, guest play was limited along with car traffic. The course, though, will remain open to the tourney's opening date. Jackman has let the rough grow higher than usual for the Open, but the emphasis has been placed on double cutting the greens.

Daily maintenance of the course isn't extensive in scope. Jackman does no overseeding overall, but focuses on divot areas. Medinah has no complex, computerized watering system, just the original quick-coupler unit installed in 1935.

Responsibilities follow Jackman both on and off the course and

he has good rapport with Hams and his greens committee chairman Don Johnson, who has held that post for 12 years: "Even though this is a big course, I still have a budget to stick to. There is no blank check here. Members like to compare budgets from year to year and many don't realize the escalation in costs over the last year," Jackman remarked.

Firmly believing in pooling his labor, Jackman attempts to utilize seven men each for full-time work on each of Medinah's three courses. The staff handles a fleet of 10 tractors, five triplex mowers, several utility vehicles and an assortment of spraying units, top dressers and gang mowers. There is a lot to be said for Medinah's labor pool. Economy is the biggest plus in getting big jobs accomplished, like caring for the 20,000 trees on the club grounds. Handling major assignments is nothing new to Jackman. If things get really busy, you'll prob-





ably see him hop a tractor and pitch in.

Admitting to 30 years in the hospitality business, Burt Hams is actually one of the newest additions to the Medinah staff. When the Open rolls around, Hams will be in his ninth month at the club.

Soft-spoken, but with an air of authority, Hams is a Chicago native with plenty of credentials in the business. He was manager at two other local clubs before coming to Medinah and served as a consultant for clubs preparing for tournies like the Open for eight years.

Hams shuttles you into a medium-sized office with plenty of paper lists on the walls, showing the plan for the Open activities. He fondly dubs this cubicle his "War Room". Surrounded by menus of brunches, cocktail parties and other gatherings at the club Open week, Hams gives his philosophy of club management.

"I'm a food man. I guess, I pride myself on that. To me, nothing is more critical to the club than the food you serve. I want things done right and if it means I have to wait tables, I can do that too," Hams says.

Overseeing a staff of 40 waitresses, 20 kitchen workers, 15 maintenance personnel and a dozen bartenders, Hams is meticulous in his preparation for all of Medinah's affairs. For instance, the day GOLFDOM interviewed him, Hams was getting ready for a "Ship to Shore" dinner, featuring fish. The menu highlighted more than 40 kinds of seafood.

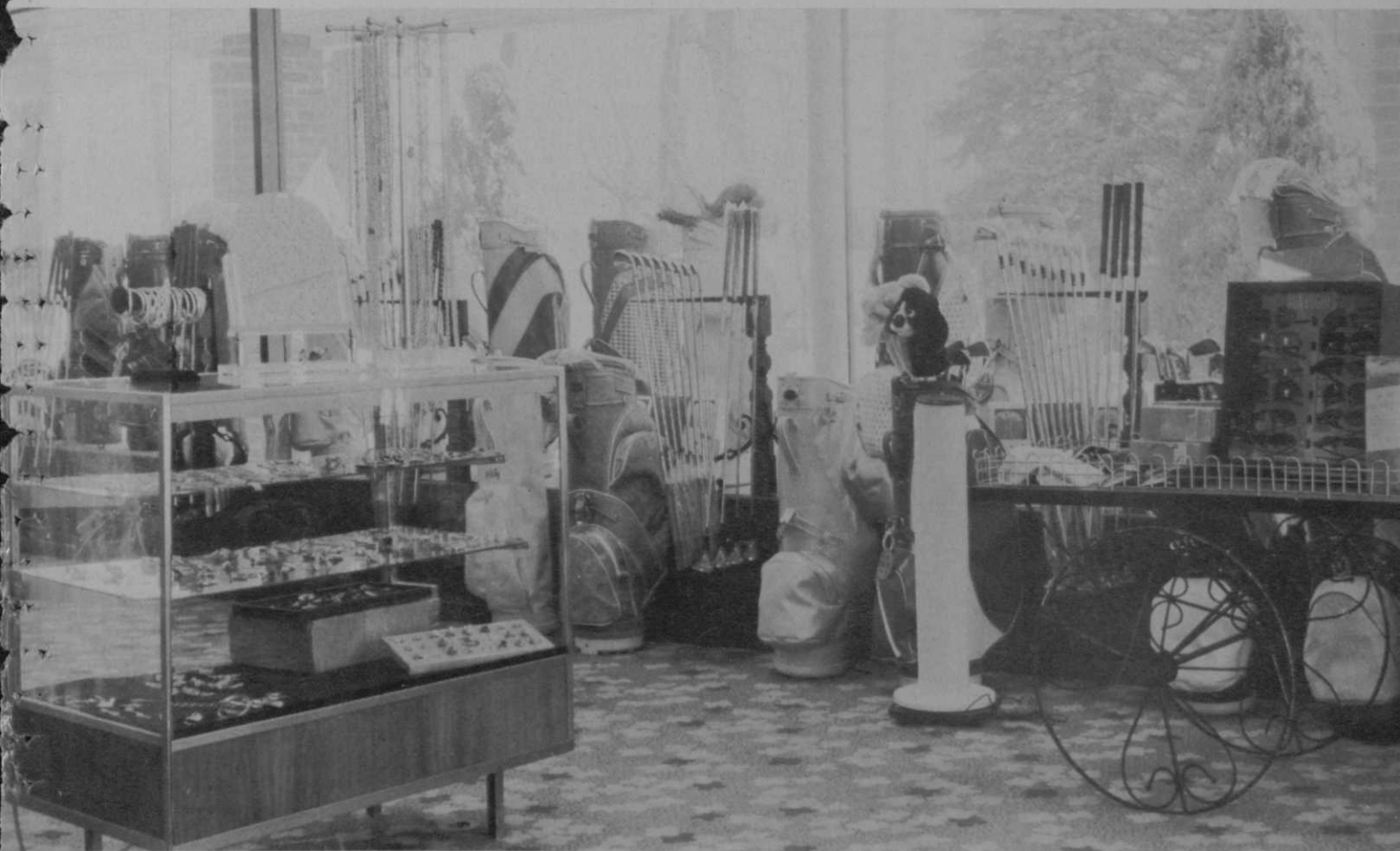
Pointing to the fact he's been down the line before in getting ready for tournaments like the Open, Hams doesn't worry about the string of continental breakfasts, lunches and other events tied to the event. Just in Medinah's regular winter program, Hams estimates

over 25,000 meals were served during the off-season.

In just his short time at the reins, Hams has made a lot of changes in the procedures of the club in general and food preparation, specifically. "I don't believe in frozen foods. Everything is fresh. I don't think that anyone can prove me wrong on this," Hams remarked. Although, Medinah handles major meals every evening, storage area for fruits, vegetables and meats are rather limited, adding more credence to Hams' philosophy of freshness.

Quality and price are the two watchwords of the Medinah kitchen and Hams prides himself on these. All purchasing is fully computerized through the club's staff comptroller. All products are bought at competitive prices.

In spite of all the positive approaches of Hams' clubhouse, he admits the food service does not



# Medinah continued

make any additional income for the club and generally operates at a loss. "We try to stay competitive with local restaurants, but at the same time we're particular about what we serve the members."

There are countless examples of the effort Hams puts into making sure Medinah's membership has the best. Hams insists on a special kind of sweet, pickled ham along with other items that can only be bought at the wholesale level.

Catering to his members' taste is what Hams is all about. He insists on all beef to be aged three to four weeks before preparation, demands two types of liver sausage from his supplier to fulfill customer wants and serves only a distinct bourbon and scotch.

Even though Medinah offers a lot of challenges, Hams admits he can't do the job alone. He gets plenty of aid from Clubhouse Manager Bob Nelson. A Washington State University graduate, Nelson got his first job at the Seattle Tennis Club, went into the Navy for a couple of years and is now enjoying his fourth season at Medinah.

Nelson is the 18th clubhouse trainee that has worked under Hams

**Dining at Medinah:** The club's main dining room plays host to a variety of functions every day. During the winter months alone, general manager Burt Hams estimates over 25,000 meals are served.

and like his predecessors, gets all the responsibility he can handle. "My job is to help coordinate things around here," Nelson said, "Communication between departments is essential and I attempt to bridge any gaps that develop."

Working closely with Hams, Nelson controls staffing, service situations, the kitchen and the regular day-to-day problems. "We try to be thorough here. From ordering to having regular training sessions for the help," Nelson noted.

Image is another asset Hams is continually concerned about. "We have an image to worry about here. Our club must remain attractive and retain its beauty for the membership."

A complete library of service manuals are kept for the kitchen staff and Hams expects a dish pictured in the book to look the same when it is served. He says quite seriously "a plate should taste as well as it looks."

There are a lot of demands on the kitchen at Medinah, but under the guidance of 22-year-old head chef Kenneth Haase, Medinah's cooks manufacture an endless array of salads, main courses, entrees and desserts. Everything works in a cycle at Medinah. For instance, the preparation of prime rib seems like a major project. The meat is roasted in rock salt, horse radish is added along with Yorkshire pudding and a lettuce leaf.

Logistical and calendar prob-

lems are common at the club, but everything seems to get ironed out. Every little detail is taken care of. With a lot of the members bringing their children to the club, Hams makes sure there is always candy or other assorted treats for the kids.

On any night of the year, between 100 and 200 people will dine at the club and most partake in the ample salad and sundae bars, where each person can create their own masterpiece.

Of course, this is not an average year for Medinah's clubhouse. A countless number of parties and receptions are on tab for the Open and its Hams' responsibility to handle them all. Last year's Open champ Hale Irwin will be honored at a casual "Night" for him with corn beef and cabbage the main dish. The added amount of work that Hams and his staff have carried has amounted to about 1,200 hours. That's tacked on to a regular work week that can often stretch to well over 50 hours.

"We try to be well prepared for every occasion at the club. That is the only way to take the risk out of this business. You have to work ahead and plan to be on top of all the eventualities," Hams said.

Situated in the rustic Illinois countryside, Medinah's clubhouse with its architecture of the Far East, houses one large main dining room, the popular porch grill and a number of attractive and comfortable lounges. Along with the dining and kitchen facilities, the club's locker rooms are also included within the clubhouse. With wide locker spaces and modern shower units, the locker room is spacious. A barber shop, steam room and service bar are also included in the arrangement.

Golf is not the only sport at Medinah. A large swimming pool, tennis courts and a trap and skeet shooting range are also on the grounds. There are always a number of activities available to the member.

All of Medinah's staff know the demands that will be made on the contestants this month, tangling with one of the toughest golf courses in the world. What the players probably won't realize is not much has changed around Medinah because of them. Good service for all is the way of life at Medinah. □

