Fee Course Owners Work For National Association

WITH SECTIONAL daily-fee course associations in Detroit, Chicago, Cleveland, and Akron as a nucleus, efforts are being made to form a national daily-fee course association. A letter sent to owners of all of the approximately 800 fee courses in the United States has drawn a 10 per cent reply from courses, but these replies are from courses estimated to represent about 30 per cent of the invested capital.

There you may have the picture of the plight of the fee courses; the larger clubs are desperate enough in many cases to be interested in salvation and the smaller ones are hopeless, figure that they can get by on a five-and-ten-cent platform or just don't give a damn.

One of the main reasons for feeling out the fee course owners on a national organization was the prospect of a code being laid down on them without any organization representative enough to put up a case for all sorts of the courses. Should this code business come up, the fee courses won't have enough time to organize and will have to accept a code which in some cases would practically drive them out of business. Not having more than 3,000 people (excepting caddies) employed at any time of the year nationally, on a generous estimate, the privately-owned fee courses wouldn't be able to make out a case on the strength of labor thrown out of work by an adverse code. The municipal courses, where the politicians usually provide jobs for guys with votes, would be set up as the answer to the need for golf facilities available to the general public.

Private opinion by high officials of the USGA continues to be that there will be no private golf club code put into effect, except in cases where the clubs are shown to be operating in competition with privately-owned business establishments. Private club competition has been a big factor in wrecking the fee course business, so the leading fee course owners are of the opinion that a national fee organization can use this code business in bringing the competitive private clubs into line as well as to stabilize prices and control internal competition among fee courses.

Consequently those who believe a national fee course association will be a strong factor in lifting the fee courses up to a generally profitable basis are planning on following up their first letter with a summary of the responses to the first letter and then seeing what the boys want to do.

“STORM IS OVER,” SAYS PHILLY GUS

Pittsburgh, Pa.—Representative of the brighter attitude among golf course equipment and supply dealers was the statement made by T. L. Gustin, head of Philadelphia Toro Co., at the greenkeepers’ convention.

“The new deal begins to appear in the golf field,” Gustin comments, “because there is noticeable evidence of a desire to let someone make a living in the golf business. At this year’s convention nothing has been heard of the visionary co-op buying ‘services’ that intend to save about one per cent net to the clubs, not counting the cost of service sacrificed because dealers no longer could afford to supply that additional and expensive emergency attention that was possible when the dealer had even a bare chance for a profit.

“I have missed sleep many a night chasing work that would enable a greenkeeper to get his worn equipment out on the course the next morning, and have not charged for the service. But it cost someone something; first of all me and other distributors who have given service, and in the long run, the clubs.

“Today’s deal is to allow a fair profit. I see the trend sharply defined in other businesses. The appearance of this tendency in the golf business is a cheering and overdue sign of better management.”
How Greenkeepers Should Regard Golf and Their Jobs

By OSCAR B. FITTS* 
Supt., Columbia C. C., Chevy Chase, Md.

Since we have chosen as our trade, a profession which is sponsored by golf, it stands to reason that our attitude toward the game should be one of appreciation and encouragement even when considered from a selfish or personal viewpoint only. When we take into consideration the more worthy unselfish and, I might say, patriotic viewpoint, we visualize millions of people who enjoy the pleasure, the health-giving recreation, the element of clean competitive sportsmanship and good fellowship, and the enormous field of employment for thousands of people, all of which are provided by the game. Then we recognize a far more worthy reason why we should present an attitude of appreciation and encouragement toward the game.

What is our attitude toward the game? I know of no better answer than that expressed by the action of the sponsors and attendants of this convention and every other gathering of greenkeepers I have attended since I became interested in greenkeeping. Our attitude is expressed by the trend of conversation, by the papers read and the interest shown in the exhibition of golf supplies and equipment.

Our efforts to acquaint ourselves with every means calculated to help us to provide the best possible conditions for the game leave little doubt that our attitude toward golf is still one of faith and genuine appreciation. We appreciate the game for its contribution to humanity and we have faith in the possibilities of its future as a provider of remunerative industry and its continuous fascination and popularity as a game. Otherwise, we surely would lose interest in the things which are so entirely dependent upon it.

Greenkeepers' Interest Broad

Our attitude toward golf as a sport is very generally expressed in our evident interest in all items of news pertaining to the game. Give a greenkeeper his local newspaper and I'll venture to say that in the majority of cases at least he will not overlook any item of news pertaining to golf or his club or fail to show in some manner his prevalent interest in such news.

It is an interesting fact that a great many of the most successful greenkeepers are familiarly conversant with the rules and terms of golf as well as with the technicalities of greenkeeping. Ask a greenkeeper where or when any particular important golf event either national or sectional was held. By whom such event was won? Or any other question as to the outstanding highlights of such events and almost invariably the answers are at his command. We talk, play, read, and think golf, all of which is evidence of a favorable and appreciative attitude toward the game.

The industrial phase of golf is made up of the various elements required to provide facilities and equipment necessary to the pursuit of the game. During the past decade or more the golf industry has occupied a place among the great industries of this country. The manufacture and production of golf and golf course equipment and supplies has kept millions of dollars in circulation and has provided employment for thousands of people. Construction and maintenance of golf courses, clubhouses, and other facilities incident to the game has also been a great source of employment and trade. These and various other factors pertinent to the golf industry certainly merit liberal consideration and public-spirited appreciation. And it is my impression that no better example of our attitude toward "golf the industry" could be cited than that expressed in the same interest and enthusiasm exhibited at the conventions and gatherings previously mentioned.

Golf's Losses in Line

While it is impossible to disregard enormous loss suffered by golf and the indus-
try as a result of the general economic depression, it cannot be regarded as relatively greater than that which has been experienced by other sports and other industries. I do not feel that we as greenkeepers nor the many other beneficiaries of the trade and employment subsidiary to golf should accept this condition as an insurmountable obstacle to the success of the game or the business any more than have the promoters and pursuants of other sports and industries.

It has been gratifying to the interested observer to note that as the trying conditions have presented themselves they have been met with increasingly courageous efforts that have proven successful to a degree that would have been unbelievable three years ago. Credit for the degree of success achieved by the greenkeepers must be shared with the equipment manufacturers, the producers and distributors of supplies, scientific research, and many other contributing agencies.

The liberal co-operation of these agencies supplemented by our unflagging interest in our work and our pride in the quality of our achievements have made possible the continuation of a very high standard of golf course maintenance at a cost much less than would have been possible only a few years ago. We have learned to organize and utilize labor in a manner that greatly reduces the labor hours per unit of work. Manufacturers have developed labor-saving machinery and we have learned to use it advantageously. Chemists have perfected more effective and less expensive formulas for the control of diseases and other pests and for fertilization, and we have learned to use these more effectively and more economically.

Helped by Scientists

Science has contributed greatly to our cause. The scientific investigator through research has accumulated an enormous store of valuable information and has given it to us through the agencies of men who have been trained to interpret and disseminate scientific information in terms modified in such manner as to be easily understood and economically and effectively applied. Through the aid of these men we no longer have to depend on scientific or technical generalities as they bring the information to us in such form as to be applicable to the various individual conditions obtaining on our golf courses.

The conditions which we encounter in golf course work are the objects of the experiments which have been and are still being scientifically conducted in this particular field of research. Consequently each specific case receives thorough investigations and the results of these investigations are given to us in specific case prescriptions. This modern tendency to simplify and allocate scientific information has been the means by which science has given us the greatest aid in our efforts to save money in golf course construction and maintenance, and better still to keep our golf courses in better condition at no additional cost.

Other important scientific contributions to our work have been the development of simple methods of testing soils to determine their physical suitability to turf production and the presence of or the possible deficiency of necessary plant food elements.

How may these scientific contributions have affected our attitude toward golf? They have given us added assurance in our efforts to cope with the every-day problems of golf course maintenance and consequently a brighter and more confident attitude toward the work which we have chosen as our profession, and in turn toward golf, the sponsor of this profession.

The progress of the game during the past decade has brought about many developments in various features of the average player's game that have in some cases made necessary certain adjustments of facilities for the game, including the structural features of the golf course and maintenance methods. In still other cases the modern game permits alterations and adjustments of other features that are not actually required for the game but that tend to simplify maintenance problems. Here the greenkeeper has shown his attitude of interest by following the progress of the game and acquiring an understanding of the inherent requirements, modernizing his course and maintenance methods to suit. These modernization activities have included the installation of drainage and irrigation systems, construction and alteration of greens, tees, bunkers, etc., and changes in methods of watering, mowing, fertilization, and other minor phases of maintenance, most of which have been beneficial both from a standpoint of the game and the up-keep of the golf course.
Greenkeeping must be progressive in order to provide satisfactory facilities for a progressive game, and we as greenkeepers must be progressive and bear a progressive attitude toward the game in order to keep up with our jobs. That many of us have managed to hold on to our jobs during this period of golf progression and economic depression bears evidence of progressive attitude and inclination toward both the game and our jobs.

**Landscaping Is Asset**

There is one particular phase of the true golf course modernization scheme which I believe to be of great importance in the matter of adding attraction to the game and elevating the recognized rating of our profession, and this is the beautification or improvement of landscape appearance. There has been a very noticeable trend in this direction during the past few years which has certainly justified any effort or expense put forth in such work.

Yet I am inclined to believe that we greenkeepers as a rule would find it to our ultimate advantage if we gave more thought and consideration to this work in the future than we have in the past.

Of course the scarcity of funds has been a handicap to such work but it is reasonable to believe that if sufficient thought is given to this end we will be able to accomplish quite a lot with little or no added expense. A little cleaning up of the waste areas here and there and the judicious planting of native trees or shrubs, which may be found on most club properties, at properly selected sites about the course will add greatly to the beauty and attractiveness of the course and grounds. This work may be accomplished at such spare time as may occur during the course of a season at practically no noticeable burden on the club treasury. I earnestly recommend that this phase of greenkeeping be thoughtfully considered when planning next year's maintenance and improvement program, as I am sure that such work will be appreciated and commended by our employers and by those who use or have access to the course or grounds.

Our attitude toward our clubs should be considered from the standpoint of both business and association. Our work brings us in contact with many members of the club, which necessitates diplomatic consideration of their requests or suggestions. While, as a rule, we are directly accountable only to the green-chairman, we are frequently called upon to explain various phases of our work or to defend our ideas or reasons for various things we do or leave undone to any member of the club who wishes to discuss such matters with us. In this respect our position is different from that of most business employees. Being accountable in a sense to each member of the club may be confusing or even disagreeable at times, yet we seem to get something out of the contact that tends to instill within us a more fraternal attitude toward the members than employees have toward their employers.

The responsibilities of keeping the golf course and grounds in good condition rest jointly on the shoulders of the green-chairman and the greenkeeper; consequently these two men should understand each other as thoroughly as possible and should co-operate fully in all matters requiring joint thought and action. They should be able to discuss matters pertaining to the upkeep or improvement of the course in such a manner as to bring about intelligent and practical execution of the work, and this can be accomplished only through understanding and liberal co-operation.

The greenkeeper's attitude toward his club and its officials should be loyal, respectful, and co-operative, and the extent of time marking the period that many greenkeepers serve one club bears evidence that such a policy is generally accepted and practiced in our profession.

There seems to be some sort of inherent bond that grows up with association with a golf club, even in the capacity of an employe, that we can't very well elude if we are interested in our work and are at all receptive to human interests and activities. The strength of this bond is indicated by the comparatively small percentage of people who voluntarily abandon club work in preference for other occupations after they have once become affiliated with such work.

We have fought a good fight in our respective positions and in our individual and collective efforts to aid golf and the clubs to survive and thrive during this depression period. I am confident that our attitude has been made no less loyal or faithful as a result of extended efforts and added responsibilities, and that we shall carry on indefinitely with the same interest, courage, and determination which is bound to result in continued aid to golf and our clubs.
I Survived the Panic by Studying My Club

By SAMMY BELFORE
Pro. Ridgeview Golf Club, Duluth, Minn.

I HAVE completed my fourth year as pro at Ridgeview and as I review the work and results I am confident the job has been well handled. That is one of the things I figure every pro ought to do; look back over his work for the season and see where he has missed. The tendency is to blame the members or the club if the job isn’t paying, but that’s only a human failing, not confined to pros, instead of being the right answer to the pro problem of “how can I make a good living?”

It looks to me like the most important of all pro jobs is to build up his club, and while he can’t usually do this by going right out and getting members to sign application blanks he can do the work just as effectively by making the club and its playing program so lively and attractive that people want to join.

One of the places where a lot of us fall down is by not taking a more active part in the preparation of tournament schedules for men and women at our clubs. If we can add to the zest of these events we are bound to have more people coming out to the clubs. Only in the cases of the ultra-exclusive clubs have I heard of situations where the helpful interest of the pros in preparing a playing schedule might be represented.

The pro who doesn’t get busy with his committee on this schedule work early in the season and maintain an active interest in the success of the tournaments is losing one of his best basic bets for business. This means plenty of work. He may have to telephone a lot of people, or when he is busy, see that his assistant calls up people to make sure that they are reminded of the events.

Check Up Your Plans

Every fellow is better off when he takes some time out during the winter and sits down with a pencil and some paper to figure out just what he is going to do at his club next year. Too many of us are liable to take our work simply as a matter of fact and never plan ahead like successful business establishments have to do. Even if we are very smart, we can’t know it all in this golf business; it’s growing and changing too rapidly.

Who, for instance, would have thought eight to 10 years ago that we were going to see the day when the women’s interest in golf was to be the keen and constructive force that it has been for the last couple of years—right in the worst of the depression—and which it is certain to be next season? Next we may see the golf clubs’ interest extend to the point where every youngster from 10 years old on up, who is one of a member’s family, will have to be taken into consideration in the pro department’s operations.

In the pro business we haven’t suffered any worse than most other businesses during the depression. In fact, we probably have been better off than most businesses.

The one thing that we always can depend on is the truth that while most of the country has been suffering from over-selling during boom times, at no time has golf ever over-sold itself. We still have a big market right at our doorsteps and we can’t alibi ourselves by throwing the entire blame for our poor business onto general business conditions.
The set-up at Ridgeview is ideal—a good course, not too long, but plenty sporty—and a low rambling clubhouse built for golf players. The porches and flagstone terrace give a view of that justly celebrated Lake Superior, while the background is wooded hills.

The golf shop is the heart of the club and a rendezvous for the 19th holers. I feel that I owe it to my club to keep good, dependable merchandise. At one time, sales of golf merchandise were few and far between, due to cut-prices in downtown stores. To eliminate this I had to gain the confidence of the members and show them the difference between a store-club and one made to suit their individual requirements, so I carry a complete line of clubs at all prices and talk and concentrate on one well known line.

I ran up against a funny situation. The men wanted to buy new clubs but their wives couldn't understand such extravagance. Most of the members were young married couples without too much of this world's goods. I realized the situation—but I had a swell line of clubs and had to live, by which I do not mean that I believe in using high-pressure methods.

Women's Interest Keynote

My first step was to create interest among the women golfers. The men urged their wives to play golf; even gave them their old clubs and bought new ones for themselves (generous souls). By the middle of the summer, every Wednesday brought about 40 women out for the weekly woman's tournament and luncheon. They also arranged inter-club matches—and we instituted a woman's city tournament, which drew over 100 entries the first year. The brand of golf was pretty poor but the girls had fun and each was determined to be the champ the following year—consequently I had lessons from dawn till dark.

Women are thrifty souls. After a lesson, they would practice. Every morning saw them out early, working at their game. They also tried to interest their husbands into taking lessons. When the men who had scoffed at lessons saw the progress their wives were making, they decided to give the pro a chance to help their game.

The men's tournament became more of a success. The men entered with a keener spirit and a large feminine gallery. As the men progressed the girls decided that new clubs would help. I believe that over half the Christmas gifts the husbands and wives of Ridgeview give each other are sportswear or clubs from my shop.

I instituted mixed two-ball foursomes on Sunday afternoons—sometimes with a draw for partners and sometimes a Mr. and Mrs. affair. I sponsor an annual Jiggs and Maggie tournament of this type for which I offer prizes.

Young married couples with a good, wholesome interest in golf are a delight in their congenial enjoyment of the game. Many a husband dashes out to the club from the office during the City tournament to be there when his wife tees off (and if her clubs and bag aren't as good as that "Jones" woman's, he'll take care of that).

The season here is short, so in the fall I move my shop to an indoor golf school in the heart of the business district where men and women can drop in for practice and lessons. "Reduce your waistline and your score" is the slogan.

NET $ IS MINUS

Government Sports Goods Tax Proves Itself the Bunk—Repeal

Drive Grows

The 10 per cent tax on sporting goods put on in 1932 while gum, candy and slot machines were getting by with a 2 per cent rap, has been on long enough to have demonstrated its grave faults. So active factors in the sporting goods industry, consumers as well as manufacturers and distributors, are pleading to their congressmen for repeal of this tax.

Demerits of the tax are mainly that it yielded only $2,701,680 during the first fiscal year it was in effect and this figure is overbalanced by accounting, collecting, legal and other costs involved; and that the tax hits the kids instead of the people who can afford to pay taxes.

It was one of the dizzy guesses at taxing, now due for abandonment with the government liquor revenue coming in.

If the sporting goods industry had been making any dough or if the tax would be selective and make the sportsmen and sportswomen with a little surplus money stand the gaff, it would have some excuse. As it is, its real slug lands on the youngsters. Of course the kids can't vote, so the pros, players and other individuals in the sporting goods business can write their congressmen as mouthpieces for the youngsters without being in the position of simply squawking against a tax.
THE sporting goods trade code now is in effect but no pro, dealer or manufacturer who is in his right mind expects to have the code solve everything.

There is nothing in the code that substitutes for brains and effort. The boobs, the bleaters and the lazy muggs still will have a tough time getting by.

You can count on it, too, that there will be some curve-throwing under the code. When the code is inconvenient there will be expert efforts made to outsmart it. The NRA can't change human nature. However the NRA can police human nature and if the code is willfully and persistently violated there is that part about a $500 rap and maybe a little time in cold storage for the violators. This prospect will have the folks showing their prayer-meeting manners.

It does look like the code gives the pros more recognition and a better break than they ever had before. Other small retailers have registered complaints against codes in their fields but the general tendency of the codes is to give the small operator an even chance.

In the pro field the code has a couple of slants that differ from the usual retailing code. The pros make the golf market and exercise the strongest influence on the purchasing habits of the golfing public. These factors were balanced against the expense of selling pros in their distant locations, with their smaller orders than the large down-town stores, and, at times, with credit risk. The pros got favorable consideration. The other distinctive point of the sporting goods code is the subsidy angle about which there was long and loud arguing before a decision was reached. In fields other than sporting goods, when a manufacturer slips a purchasing agent some extra dough the ultimate customer calls it bribery and yells "Copper." Difficulty of deciding whether a pro is mainly a merchant or purchasing agent and the advertising value of playing pros' advertising made the subsidy matter complex.

But it's all settled now and the boys can start to work under the new rules.

Comment from some of the principals in the golf goods field is given on the probable effect of the new code on pro merchandising.

**Code Curtails Shady Work**

Julian Curtiss, Spalding's board chairman and dean of the golf manufacturers, says:

"I cannot better illustrate what the code is going to mean to the professionals of the country than to quote verbatim from Article 2 of the Golf Ball Manufacturers' Association and National Association of Golf Club Manufacturers part of the code:

"Section 1—No member of this division of the industry shall replace the original brand, name or trade mark on used golf balls which have been remade, rebuilt or renewed, or offer for sale used golf balls which have been remade, rebuilt or renewed, without marking on each ball and on the cartons and boxes in which they are packed, one of the following words: 'Remade,' 'Rebuilt,' or 'Renewed.'"

"Section 2—No member of this division of the industry shall offer for sale as 'seconds,' 'defectives,' or of inferior quality golf balls which are in fact not defective or inferior in any material respect."

"Section 3—No member of this division of the industry shall sell golf balls unless said balls are branded with a name."

"Section 4—No member of this division of the industry shall guarantee merchandise, except as to freedom from defects, quality, quantity, grade or construction, or replace for any other cause, merchandise which has been used."

"In addition to the above, mark this from Section 5—All merchandise shall be sold on the same terms of contract. No favorites, and no secret rebates shall be allowed."

"Then let me quote Section 6—No member of this division of the industry shall knowingly imitate the trade marks, trade names, recognized trade numbers, slogans or other marks of identification of competitors."

"And to end with, all gifts of balls are absolutely ended. The professional as well
SPALDING announces for the coming season two of the finest golf balls ever to bear the Spalding name—two balls that bid fair to reach a new high in popularity among golfers:

THE SPALDING TOURNAMENT
A high-powered, top grade golf ball designed for tournament play only. The Tournament features the famous Top-Flite construction and carries all of its qualities of uniformity and control.

The center is wound under extreme tension which in combination with its modified cover provides a golf ball of great length and outstanding controllability. It is not durable and it will respond properly only to the hard-hitting golfer. The Tournament is recommended only for professional and championship players. Dimple only. Retail 75¢ each, $9 a dozen.

THE NEW SPALDING TOP-FLITE
Designed for the low handicap golfer. For 1934 Spalding has added further refinements which will make the NEW Top-Flite more than ever the best possible combination of distance, control, feel and relative durability.

The Top-Flite in 1933 won more important championships than all other balls combined. Mesh and Dimple. 75¢ each, $9 a dozen.
as the amateur has to buy every ball with which he plays.

“Manufacturers are allowed to employ a selected list of tournament professionals and pay them a fixed salary; in consideration of this salary the professionals are expected to travel, to play in tournaments and to generally promote and aid in increasing the popularity of golf. The manufacturers that employ such professionals are making a real contribution, for nothing is more advantageous than frequent tournaments, where men and women have the chance to see expert players in action. The money paid these professionals is in many cases more than used up in their traveling expenses from city to city.

“Everything in the future is out in the open. Every professional employed by us as a tournament player is widely known as such. Underhanded methods have no opportunity to last under the broad sections of the code.

“As the code becomes a law, it will do every professional in the land good to study its contents and realize what a wonderful and helpful document it is.”

Pro in Code Spotlight

L. B. Icely, president of Wilson-Western Sporting Goods Co., interprets the code benefits to the pros in a way that gives the boys a broad view. He says:

“Recognition of the important strategic merchandising position of the professionals is an outstanding feature of the code.

“Revision of discounts to encourage and protect professional outlets and elimination of free goods and sharp discounts to retail buyers are highlights of professional benefits that were welcomed by manufacturers.

“There is no denying that the professionals’ presentation of their case was largely responsible for eradicating some of the trade evils of long standing and admittedly serious effect. Such action materially benefits professional shop merchandising.

“Earnest attention given the professionals’ case by the manufacturers during code preparation was a positive indication that the professionals now stand in a position of recognized strength and value. Manufacturers have been impressed by: (a) marked improvement in professional credit, and (b) realization by the professionals that the manufacturers must consider the general public interest and that of manufacturers’ stockholders in establishing policies and plans. These two developments gave the manufacturers a heartier appreciation of an informed and considerate business judgment among the professionals. Consequently there were fair concessions made to the professionals during code planning that I doubt would have been granted three years ago.

“Fair code making called for assuring the professionals an equitable basis of competition; one that balances their strength in governing the trend of salable merchandise through all golf goods outlets by minimizing the professional problems in selling costs and efforts.

“As near as is humanly possible, the code, in my opinion, now puts golf goods merchandising on an even basis so far as the professionals and largest sporting goods or department stores are concerned. The variable factors are simply the items of ability and effort and no professional—or other dealer—can ask for a code that will prevent him from paying the penalty for his shortcomings.

Pro and Makers Both Benefit

“Price-wrecking and other destructive practices so prominent the past two years seem to be practically eliminated by the code. This of course is good news to the professionals but even better news to the substantial manufacturers. It is one phase of the code operation pointing out that the interests of the substantial manufacturers and the professionals are identical.

“Subsidy and free goods to professionals were strenuously debated details of the code although the amount involved in actual cash was one of the smallest items affected by the code. I have been satisfied that professionals’ actual profits from concessions made to them when subsidy and free equipment changes were made will be tremendously larger than the sum involved in the two debatable details. I am confident that professional shop sales in 1934, through increased net profits, will substantiate my statement.

“It is my conclusion that the code puts the professionals in better competitive position than they ever have been before. As a matter of fact, every legitimate and sound retailer of golf goods is placed in an improved ‘competitive status by the code.”

Pro Advantages Great

E. E. Chapman, vice president of The I. A. Young Golf Co., gives his calm and studious opinion: