

# What I Have Found Out About Running a Country Club

HAVING, for three years, been serving on the Board of Directors of a country club which features golf only; having been on the Finance committee, Chairman of the Greens committee, and a member of the Building committee during the construction of our new clubhouse, leads me to give you who may be active along the same lines a chance to check up on your own organization. I will simply elaborate on things that actually have stood out as experiences.

One thing that worries a lot of clubs is the method of management. We have tried a General Manager and found it created a lot of friction. The General Manager wanted to make a fine showing financially, electing to buy the fertilizer and other materials for the greenkeeper. The outcome was that we had poor greens. This system of management caused friction with the professional and, furthermore, was continually on outs with the House committee or some one else.

We then went to the system of having a house manager under the supervision of the House committee. Our greenkeeper is under the jurisdiction of Greens committee.

The finances are checked by the Finance committee and the Secretary of the club has general supervision of the office. It is working fine.

## Getting Greens Results

About eighteen months ago we brought a well recommended greenkeeper out from the east. At that time we had the General Manager and we did not see any startling improvements in our course. We then changed management and administrations and a new Greens chairman came

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Here's one of the stories we are delighted to print. Every word of it is true. Written for GOLFDOM with the very plain understanding that we'd keep its source confidential. There is priceless value to many clubs in this candid charting of the perils that clubs must run.

We want more material like this, and so do you. If any of you have such a practical tale on your chests, tell us. You'll do golf a lot of good, just as this anonymous contributor has done with his frank "close up."

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in. Well, we went through last year without getting anyplace. In fact, it seemed our greens got worse. This year a new chairman of the greens was installed. He professed to know nothing about grasses. He knew nothing about seeds. He did, however, know how to run a business. When he took hold he ran into all kinds of excuses by the greenkeeper, the backbone of all being, "I was

not allowed to do what I knew was best." "I followed instructions from the chairman of the greens." The outcome was that he was told that it was up to him to produce results and *do it now*. He was not to do anything he did not agree was proper. The co-operation has been fine between the two and today we have the best greens we ever have had and our course is in the pink of condition. The lesson is this: Get a greenkeeper and make him "sell" you. You are a good enough business man to tell whether he knows his stuff; if you don't you are in the wrong place; if he does not know then he is in the wrong place.

## "Lone Wolf" Trouble

There is another trouble that has caused us lot of grief at our club. That is the man who is active wanting to play a lone hand and get all the glory. Once we had a president who insisted that he had to have his own way about everything. He would let them talk, but when it came to action he used his own idea and made them like it. Well, it caused us to lose the best man we had in the club as a director. We finally got rid of the president.

Then on another occasion we had a director who loved publicity and through some means of persuasion managed to have the news items mention him or show

his picture every time our club was mentioned. This worked a hardship on the other members of the Board because it became a joke with the various members who called it a "one man club." The lesson here is that if you want to be active in your club do so for the fun you get out of it and the pleasure you get out of having the boys pleased with the results. But let the other fellow do the talking, not you. Also work in a co-operation between all the active ones instead of a "one man affair."

### Cheap Help Costly

Do not use cheap help. Especially is this true in the office. We lost several hundred dollars by having cheap, and not properly chosen, assistant secretaries. Get a good man and insist upon a good set of books. This is especially true because the heads of the committees are business men or golf players and both are very busy. It takes time to run a country club and the directors have to give it.

### Building a New Clubhouse

Do not allow any one man to settle the matter of price, design, style or architecture for you. Do not go too fast. Better hold up your plans and sleep on them for a while, while you absorb the details. Don't forget one thing, the women are going to use it. Take the plans and the picture of it home and let your wife give you some ideas. It will surprise you how many things a mere man doesn't know and how much more an architect doesn't know. Check up on all the clubs in your part of the country. Talk to the members and let them talk. If I were put in charge of building a new clubhouse today I would do these things. I would give the locker rooms and showers the greatest attention as to light, air, ventilation and space.

The boys live in the locker room and the grill. The locker rooms should have lounges and a reading table. This can be a separate room or a nice light open space in the locker room proper. I would insist upon good locker room service and convenience to members getting in and out of locker rooms.

The next important thing is the Grill Room. Have it roomy and cheerful and neat. Now, when you plan the club let the grill look out over the course instead of making it back of the house affairs.

After you have given the locker rooms and the grill the choice location and treatment, do the best you can for the rest.

Have a lounge that is plain and "homey." Have a nice dining room and a clean kitchen—but don't put them first. By doing this you will build a cheaper clubhouse and a better one for the golfer. Naturally the above clubhouse is for a golfing country club. If it is social then reverse the operation.

In either of the above cases, have your parking space right adjoining the club for the convenience of ladies and especially so for rainy weather.

## Practical "Practice Green" Improves Play

By TED WOOLEY

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**I**F YOU would improve the standard of golf in your club, provide a place where members can practice all shots. It goes without saying that constant practice is essential to good golf. The best golfers are usually good mashie-shot players. But how many clubs provide space for this type of practice?

It is a bad thing to permit the practice of mashie shots onto the regular greens, and very few clubs allow it, as it causes congestion and is injurious to the greens.

A member oftentimes takes a lesson and then goes out to play without receiving the benefit from his lesson that would have resulted, had he practiced the shots demonstrated in the lesson. I always advise practice after lessons.

When I came to the Maple Hills Country Club, the officials were thinking of building a practice putting-green. I was asked to make a clay model for such a green.

We had a triangular piece of ground close to the club that was not being used, so I planned the green for this location to serve, not only as a putting-green, but as a practice green for all shots that one plays in the course of a round of golf.

I designated two entrances to the green; one, when played from a certain angle, made a good iron shot. The other was for driving. The reason for these two entrances was to make it possible to take full advantage of the three-cornered piece of ground, and to permit two players to practice their long shots at the same time.

A group of trees forms the background for this green, lending to its beauty and providing shade for putting practice. The entrance for the iron shots is level with