

"New South" Puts Business Ideas Into Its Golf

COMPLACENT northerners who used to visualize the south as lagging behind the rest of the country industrially have been jarred out of that mistaken idea some years past, and if there are any on the upper side of the Mason and Dixon line who think that the south may be slumbering past the dawn of business management in golf there is another revelation coming to them.

Due, possibly, to golf being a twelve month sport in the south there is the necessity of continual watchfulness and work on the part of the golf club officials in that section of the country. This year-around season has given southern golf club officials, even in the smaller southern towns, an opportunity to work out their clubs' destinies on a basis that provides many good ideas for northern clubs.

One shining example of how the south is putting its golf clubs on business platforms and facing about on the old idea of casual and costly policies may be witnessed at Columbus, Ga.

The Country Club of Columbus has 250 members. It owns its handsome and well appointed two-story clubhouse and the 120 acres on which its eighteen hole golf course is located. Four years ago the club was insolvent and, had it been a commercial enterprise, the property would have been sold for the bonds. At this dark time the club mustered Frederick B. Gordon into service as its president. Gordon undertook the strenuous rescue job when he was pledged the full support of the club's governing board of twelve. He was willing to work but insisted, as would any other successful business man, that his administration not be handicapped by dead timber. This governing board has a monthly dinner meeting at the clubhouse and all who are absent with excuse are so reported in the record. Continued absence without valid excuse means the member is dropped from the board.

Gordon has been re-elected three successive years so from this the success of his administration's methods may be judged.

"Strictly Business" Is Keynote

"Strictly business" is the slogan of the

Gordon administration that provides play for the members at notably low costs. The club has a paid secretary-treasurer with an office at the clubhouse and regular office hours. This official is the pilot who sees that the administration's course is followed precisely as planned. He gives his full time and efforts to the job.

With the exception of monthly dues of \$8 for active members, (the initiation fee is \$25), the club is run on a strictly cash basis for all golf, tennis, swimming pool, house rent and cafe charges. At annual meetings for the four years of the Gordon regime the president has been able to report that not a dollar is past due from any member. During this time the club's daily income has increased from \$50 to \$100. The club makes money on its cafe and on all other details of operation except course maintenance. Some evidence of the club's constant campaign to maintain and increase its business is apparent on club's letterhead which carries the line, "CIVILIAN AND ARMY SOCIAL HEAD-QUARTERS — GOLF, TENNIS, SWIMMING, DANCING, CAFE."

There are only a few active members who do not frequently visit the club, these being the men who joined simply to help maintain what Mr. Gordon terms, "a semi-public institution."

Monthly Budget Checkup

Chairmen are advised monthly as to their standing on their budgets. There are nine committees; finance, by-laws, house, grounds, membership, army, golf, tennis and swimming. The entertainment committee is a sub-committee under the house committee. Chairmen of each standing committee must hold at least two regular meetings a year. The by-laws state: "chairmen shall not expend for any purpose over \$50 at any one time, or make any contract, or adopt any policy of importance without the approval of a majority of their committee."

Members must register and buy tickets before playing. Each ticket is for three holes play. Tickets are sold for 15 cents each; three for 40 cents and six for 75 cents. Caddies are paid by these tickets

only. Players without caddies must register and buy tickets which then can be cashed in after playing. This is for record-keeping.

Swimming pool charges are 25 cents for adults and 15 cents for children under 15 years of age. Reduced price coupon books are sold in \$10 and \$15 books.

Locker fee is 25 cents a month payable monthly.

When not in use by the club the clubhouse may be rented by members for private parties at a cost of \$25 a night. The use of the clubhouse for any money-making affairs of any organization outside the

The club's directors are not called together often but all who are in the city at the time of the meeting show up. The directors are notified in advance as to the questions to be presented at the meeting.

Atlanta's Double Club

At Atlanta there is one of the few organizations successfully operating two clubs. The Atlanta Athletic Club has a city clubhouse at 44 Carnegie Way and a country clubhouse at East Lake. Both buildings are new. The city clubhouse furnished, cost \$1,364,623, including the land. The new country clubhouse cost,

AT Columbus (Ga.) they help keep the club out of the red by getting desirable rental users of the clubhouse. Atlanta (Ga.) has a "certificate of indebtedness" plan that helped to put the club in excellent financial position. These are two of the many good ideas that put southern golf on a business basis.

club itself, to which non-members are invited, is billed at \$50 a night and \$25 for day use, with the exception of organizations of Columbus women affiliated with the City Federation of Women's Clubs which are allowed the use of the clubhouse for afternoon card parties for \$15.

The Country Club of Columbus has an active and able committee of twelve women who give bridge parties and benefit balls, using the profit from these affairs, about \$2,000 a year, for club furnishings.

Simple As A B C

At Mobile, T. K. Jackson, president of The Country Club says they have found the simple principles of good management, faithfully applied, highly satisfactory. The club works on a budget system and has no financial difficulties as it "cuts the coat to the cloth." Post cards bearing the program for the week and the month and calling attention to the club's excellent cafe bring good patronage to the clubhouse. It is not the club's policy to operate the house at a profit.

After deducting from its gross income the club's fixed charges such as bond interest, taxes, insurance and similar items, the balance is divided between the house committee and the greens committee, the entertainment committee being part of the house committee at The Country Club of Mobile. This split gives the greens committee a budget of \$1,000 a hole for the course.

furnished, \$159,575. Atlanta Athletic Club suffered complete loss of its clubhouse by fire on two occasions, but was fortunate enough to be fully insured when the last fire occurred.

Each of the Atlanta Athletic Club establishments stands on its own bottom, and each department likewise. The club does not operate on a budget system, but its operations are so conducted and systematized that the club can tell each day what every department is doing. A monthly audit is made and if it doesn't check with the daily reports there is a prompt investigation and application of corrective methods.

Club Well Financed

Atlanta makes a strong point of operating on a business basis. The Athletic club's credit is fine and never abused. In the annual report of President Scott Hudson reference is made to the value of the club's certificate plan. Mr. Hudson stated, "the certificate plan was not only a wonderful help to us when we needed money but also in buying our furniture and equipment as a reasonable price for cash. It also is the best collecting agency I ever have encountered." This certificate plan involves each resident member depositing with the club \$100 for which the member receives from the club a certificate of deposit. Not less than 60 days after termination of his membership this deposit, less any amount due the club, will be refunded

to the member or his estate upon surrender of the certificate of deposit.

It is the Atlanta Athletic club idea that if a club has popular prices it will draw the members. They state it like this: "You have a fixed overhead and if the members do not use the club the overhead is the same. Therefore the club can afford to sell for lower prices than a hotel or restaurant because the overhead has to be cared for, business or no business. We fight for volume and in getting the volume we manage to offset practically all the overhead together with the cost of the goods."

This club believes in a small directorate and in small committees. There are only five directors, one of whom is the president and another the vice-president and treasurer of the club. These small bodies have to function. Responsibility is too sharply defined for denial or side-stepping and only men who are workers will undertake to serve.

The Atlanta Athletic club is committed to a policy of every department being as nearly as possible self-sustaining. It is the executive aim to give each department what it asks for but if the requests seem out of line the judgment of the directorate rules.

New Members for Financing

At Austin (Texas) the country club worked its way out of the financing dilemma that confronts many clubs of high standards by taking in more members. Unavoidable higher costs due to the more exacting requirements of members have hit a number of the older clubs especially hard and the simple and sane relief, when practical, is to take in more members. There are comparatively few cases in the smaller cities where new members can't be handled with slight alterations in the locker-room and perhaps the addition of a practice area near the first tee to care for those who are compelled to wait for starting time. If enough ground is available put in an approach practice space, as well as the putting practice green, or if possible, allow wood club practice facilities.

Due to golf's great growth in the last several years older clubs generally will not have much difficulty in getting the number of good new members necessary to good financing and operation that escapes red figures.

A. T. Knies, president of the Austin

Country club outlines the organization's operations in telling GOLFDOM:

"We work on a budget having found this is the only sane way to operate our club.

"We have had financial difficulties like many other clubs. We try to maintain our club on a high plane and found this spring that we were operating at a deficit of about \$2,000.00, so we had a meeting of the Board of Directors, increased our membership by putting on a campaign for new members that secured about 70. This has put us in first class financial condition and we hope to operate during the next year without a deficit.

"We have some 400 members, and a great many who do not attend the club except at rare intervals but want to retain their membership so they may entertain their friends at their pleasure.

"I am glad to state that we very seldom call a directors meeting but what we have a full quorum, and generally a full directorate present.

"We do not try to make any money out of the house end of the club. This is a college town and we have a great number of sorority and fraternity houses, both giving many large parties during the year which generally are held at our club. We try to give a splendid entertainment and good food at nominal price at as nearly cost as possible, so that at the end of the year with probably from \$10,000 to \$15,000 cafe account, we make anywhere from \$500 to \$1,000, which does not more than cover the wear and tear on equipment.

"Regarding course maintenance, we are very liberal in the maintenance of our course and try to keep it up in first class condition. The golf playing members realize that the course itself is receiving all financial assistance possible from the club."

Is New Building Fireproof? Ask Fire Department

BEFORE erecting the new clubhouse, or in fact any building on the grounds, take the local fire department into your confidence. Many valuable suggestions can be obtained from a wide awake fire-chief, suggestions that may save the club hundreds of dollars in insurance premiums later. Don't assume the building you are putting up is a fireproof structure—take the plans to the fire-chief and let him pass on the matter.