

Officials Probe for Answer to WHO PAYS?

"Editor,
"GOLFDOM,
"Chicago.

"Sir:

"Your article, 'Who Pays?' as published in July GOLFDOM, brings to mind some angles of club life which are evidently foreign to the common knowledge of most club members, and it might be advisable that such an article be written for publication in other club magazines for the education of those individuals who feel they have done their duty to the club when they have paid their dues.

"Whether it be city club, country club, or golf club or any other association of this type, you will find that no more than 10 per cent of the membership know the cost of management, yearly expenditures, mortgage interests and many other expenses connected with an institution maintained in such a manner as to offer the very highest type of service to a group of exacting individuals.

"Checking through the memberships of various city clubs, as well as golf clubs, we find a number of men whose names appear on the membership roll at anywhere from three to fifteen clubs. I have in mind right now a man who belongs to seven golf clubs, four city clubs, three commercial clubs and several other denominational or sectarian organizations.

"Granted, this man is wealthy to permit his becoming a member of so many clubs, yet the fact remains that he is not supporting each club in a manner which would permit of their having many members of his type. He plays golf at four of his clubs each year and at another club his only visits are occasioned by the monthly dinner dances.

"Another type of member is fairly well covered in your article—that is the man who continually uses the club, continually finds fault with the club and very seldom supports the club financially. For this type of man I have another extreme case, the details of which are very vivid in my mind having had occasion to play golf with him only yesterday and having access to the books at the house I looked up this man's record.

"He is a young man who has made sufficient money that he has retired from business and is living on the interest of his investments. He has played not less than 18 holes of golf at this one club on sixty-five occasions in the past ninety days. He has won four prizes worth \$75 in six club tournaments this year but up to date he has not spent five cents in either the pro shop or the house. His entire caddy fee for three months has been \$19.25, inasmuch as he was compelled to use caddies when playing tournament matches.

"In looking over the books we find some twenty-eight men who have been playing golf from two to three days each week while their house accounts show an expenditure of from \$6.00 to \$12.00 total for the past four months. Please understand now that I am not criticizing individuals for their inability to support an institution, but like the writer of your article, 'Who Pays?' I, too, believe that the non-supporting member is a decided liability, standing in the way of men who would be only too glad to join and support a club provided the opportunity were presented.

"Our board, after discussing your article, requested the writer to analyze the cost of maintaining our club, produce a statement in letter form for distribution among our members and suggest a plan to be devised whereby the entire membership be informed that each individual must carry his share of the load if he is to remain in the club. Working with our bookkeeper we condensed our report as best we could and are submitting data to the board for their consideration.

Costs per Member

"Our clubhouse is about average type, and we find the investment in our house, including locker room and furnishings, to be \$175,000.00 on which full insurance coverage is maintained. Our rate is a little high, running 4 per cent, so that the insurance cost is \$7,000.00 per year or \$20.00 per member. We have our own water system which cost us \$25,000.00 to install, and the cost of producing water, which represents only electric power and repairs to

pump and tank, amounts to \$2,000.00 yearly.

"Our kitchen, dining room and clubhouse, exclusive of locker room, requires the services of fifteen employes. Salaries, plus board and room, run approximately \$24,000.00 yearly or over \$65.00 per member. Laundry bills approximately \$3,600.00 per season and taxes on the property \$1,800.00.

"It might be of interest to some members to learn that the salaries and board of the locker room employes in practically every club amounts to as much or more than the total yearly locker rental, and the laundry in the locker rooms plus the replacement of linen will cost not less than \$6.00 per member per year. For this reason the locker rental should not be less than \$20.00 per member.

"Since your subject, however, related merely to the support of the clubhouse, pro shop and caddies, let us confine my figures to these departments. A second reason for confining ourselves to these departments is that the dues paid by members, which are \$150.00 yearly, just about cover the maintenance expenses of the golf course plus the insurance, taxes and water expense. The house then will naturally show a loss unless sufficient patronage is given to overcome the labor and general supplies expenses.

"To the sum paid to these employes in the house, which as above stated amounts to \$24,000.00, we must add electric lights, telephones, power for electric refrigeration, depreciation on equipment, ice, coal and oil heating bills and miscellaneous items of repair which will bring the cost of operating our house to approximately \$35,000.00 per season.

"Now, unless the members do support the house, we are bound to find, as we usually do, a deficit of \$10,000.00 to \$12,000.00 and it is needless to say that this deficit is not necessary. The members of our golf club like those of all other clubs eat two or three meals daily and they can obtain a good meal in our house just as economically as they can produce one at home, and they will get a better meal in our house than they can find in most restaurants. It seems, then, that it is thoughtlessness on the part of many members that the dining room is not supported as it should be.

"If a man or woman is going to play golf in the morning they should make it a point to eat their noon lunch at the club, and if

they are going to play in the early afternoon they should come to the club to eat their meal or lunch before they play or before they dress to play, instead of eating it in some restaurant downtown. If they would but eat their evening meal at the club when they play late or have their wives come to the club for dinner instead of leaving about 6:30 to go to some cabaret or back home to eat, the dining room would not show a deficit.

Plea for Good Pro

"The subject of the pro shop and caddies is one of interest to every member. Why a member should buy supplies at cut-rate stores rather than support his own club professional is beyond conception of those men who think of humanity and reciprocity and friendship as often as the idea of making or spending money. A man might buy some shopworn or last year's so-called "seconds" in balls or supplies at a lower first cost than the prices the professional asks, but how a man could buy cut-price goods and then look his professional in the face when he goes to the club is more than I can understand. The professional is paid a very meager salary in comparison to men of other professions and he must be of excellent character as well as a diplomat if he is to satisfy the whims of three hundred and fifty men and their wives at the golf club. The professional, then, we feel is entitled to the sale of all golf club supplies used by all our members and unless they do purchase their supplies from him it will be necessary for us to obtain a cheaper or very poor professional or dispense with professional services.

"Insofar as caddies are concerned, the caddie committee reports it is a very difficult task to obtain and retain boys for this work because of the transportation facilities, uncertainty of earning possibilities and the fact that the wealthier clubs guarantee each boy \$1.25 per day if he appears for caddie service whether or not he is engaged for that work. Other clubs are assigning a caddie to each member as he appears at the club. The caddie's time starts when he is given his ticket and while waiting for the member to come out of the house to play. The wealthy member is very glad to have such an arrangement because it assures him of a caddie, and naturally the boys are doing this work for the money they can earn, hence their desire to go to those clubs where an income is assured. The point is that unless the members do

use caddies we cannot expect caddies to come to our golf course, and if a man cannot afford a caddie he cannot afford a membership in a golf club.

"Another point which many members do not suspect is that a good caddie can or will take from three to eight strokes from the player's score by conferring with him on the proper club, the length of shot and analyzing the player's swing. A caddie is worth the price of his services every time he tells a player what caused the last slice or why he topped a ball, and very few players know so well as the caddie just what causes the poor shots.

Set Monthly Charge

"We have in mind, or rather our board is considering, right now the idea of charging each member \$20.00 per month during our seven months' season for house and caddie account. Should the member's bills exceed this amount, the \$20.00 advance charge will be deducted and the member will pay his regular monthly bill, but should the member's house and caddie account amount to less than \$20.00 during any month, the member shall be asked to pay the \$20.00. It is our idea that when, and if, this plan is approved and put into practice, there will be no occasion for assessments on account of the clubhouse, and the dining room will perhaps make a little profit which will be applied toward paying the interest on the mortgages on our property.

"We, too, have now started checking the expenditures of our membership as well as the number of times the members use the club, with the idea of getting down to cold facts and have the member decide whether or not he is in the frame of mind to pay his logical and proportionate share of the expenses of our institution.

"Yours very truly,
"A. C."

(New York City)

Sock the Slacker

"Editor,
"GOLFDOM,
"Chicago.
"Sir:

"It appears to me that the average member of the country club of today is paying about as much attention to his obligation as a member of the club as so many people are doing with their right to vote at school elections, municipal elections, etc. There

DO YOU WANT TO USE "WHO PAYS"?

"Who Pays," the lead article in the July issue of GOLFDOM, handled the matter of the non-supporting member in a manner that obviously aroused golf club officials. Some of them criticized us for publishing the article, but more of them thought that it was a decidedly helpful feature and dealt with a major problem of golf club operation.

Early requests for extra copies of this issue entirely exhausted the edition. At the solicitation of many clubs who wanted to circularize their entire membership with this article and focus attention on the responsibility involved in club membership, we have held the article in type and will furnish reprints at the price of \$1.25 per hundred.

If you think that these reprints might be helpful in arousing the club membership to the realization of the necessity of general patronage, advise us of the number of reprints you want to cover your membership list.

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are too many of them that are 'letting George do it.'

"If any article ever hit the nail on the head it is that in July GOLFDOM entitled 'Who Pays?' I wonder how many secretaries have read that. Surely every one of them should read it and send a copy to their entire membership.

"The 'slacker' member is the first one to criticize the food, the showers, the tees, the greens and the poor caddies. He doesn't use a caddie, he never uses the café, he merely pays his dues and then expects the club to get along without the bottle of red ink at the end of the year.

"There is a direct obligation with every membership card and the sooner the new member realizes that or the 'old slacker' is told that truth plainly, just that soon will clubs show better statements, provide

more privileges and maintain a larger waiting list.

"Who Pays?" is what every member should know. Keep up the good work.

K. L. (Iowa)

Business Must Warrant Operation

"Editor,

"GOLFDOM,

"Chicago.

"Sir:

"The article, 'Who Pays?' is excellent and will bring home particularly to members that if they want a club and clubhouse to really be prepared to meet their every want at any time, they must patronize the institution so that it may be able to cater to its members efficiently.

"The rules applying to a business apply to a club. You cannot expect your neighborhood store to be able to supply your every need unless business warrants carrying a varied stock.

"The article will make members think before they kick—let us hope.

"Sincerely,

"E. W."

(New York)

"Finest and Most Complete"

"Editor,

"GOLFDOM,

"Chicago.

"Sir: We have read with intense interest the article, 'Who Pays?' in the July issue of GOLFDOM. In my opinion this is the finest and most complete article ever written on the subject.

"We are desirous of securing 350 reprints of this article. Will you please advise if you will be able to furnish them for us and what the cost will be.

"Thanking you, we remain,

Very truly yours,

J. R. (Detroit).

Too Cold-Blooded

"Editor,

"GOLFDOM,

"Chicago.

"Sir:

"When it comes to printing real up-to-the-minute golf club articles, GOLFDOM bows to no competitor. The direct cause of this sweeping statement is the article 'Who Pays?' in your July issue. It is a ten-strike at the fundamental weakness in present day club organization.

"My only criticism is that few clubs can afford to be as cold-blooded as your author says his club became. If we asked our relatively inactive members to resign, we couldn't replace them—we are in a small town and all the golfers in town belong to this club.

"I hope 'Who Pays?' encourages further contributions to your excellent pages on this same subject. Surely somewhere in America, some golf club has met this problem and licked it. Why don't you issue a special appeal for succor? There must be an answer.

"Cordially,

"G. N. P."

(Kansas)

Thinking Backward

Editor,

GOLFDOM,

Chicago.

Sir:

"I congratulate you on your good fortune in getting the house-chairman who wrote 'Who Pays' to tell of his club's procedure in securing an equitable distribution of club costs among its members.

"We have been thinking backward in the financial operation of golf clubs. We pay far more attention to spending the money than we do to getting it. While golf clubs customarily are organized 'not for profit' they are not organized for the deficits that are far too common, and nine cases out of ten are the result of lack of expected patronage from members who shirk their club responsibilities.

"I think the day will come when the better golf clubs will establish a quota of club patronage per member and in taking in new members require a deposit sufficient to cover this quota for a few months in advance. I recall mention made in GOLFDOM some time ago of a 'certificate of deposit' idea being used in the financing of a new clubhouse. A combination of this idea and the establishment of a set minimum annual house account, as a requirement for membership, would relieve us of the financial problem that is so serious with many clubs at the present time.

"Assessments are not the answer. The equal participation of each member in the club's activities is obviously the rational solution."

Sincerely,

W. R. (Pennsylvania).