



At the left is Manager J. L. Sweitzer of North Shore, with his talented aide-de-camp who made the sugar model of the club's home for the centerpiece at its annual meeting.

LOSE MONEY TO MAKE PROFIT ON Feature Dollar Dinner THAT BRINGS BUSINESS TO NORTH SHORE

By Jack Fulton, Jr.

ABOUT half way through the lead article in last month's GOLFDOM appeared the statement that a certain unnamed club in the Chicago district had served a full-course table d'hote dinner to its members during this past season, had charged only \$1.00 for it, and had ended the year with a profit on dining-room operation.

Our statement was a trifle strong for a number of club managers who have spent many years in the business and have never yet been able to drop below \$1.50 without a firm conviction that an appalling deficit was inevitable. They invited GOLFDOM to prove its statement.

J. L. Sweitzer is the manager who serves the dollar table d'hote dinner. He is the manager of the North Shore Golf Club and when I found him in his office and had introduced myself he beat me to the draw.

"I suppose," he said, "you're another one

who wants to find out about my table d'hote dinners and how I can make a profit at a dollar? The word got out and I'm getting about ten phone calls a day from managers asking me how I do it."

"That's right," I said, "how do you do it?"

"I don't! I've never said I'm showing a profit on those meals! But here's what I am doing: I'm serving a dinner for \$1.00 that is the equal of any \$1.50 meal you ever ate and at the same time *operating the dining-room at a profit*. That's different."

"How did you do it—raise your a la carte prices?" I asked.

"No, that wasn't it. We left them where they were. It was a case of increasing patronage. Let me give you an outline of what happened.

"North Shore ranks very high in the Chicago district. While it isn't a rich

man's club, it isn't a poor man's club either and price doesn't enter into North Shore's operating problems anywhere near as much as in many younger clubs. Our members will pay a fair price, but they demand the best.

"Before this past season, the dining-room had been doing a comfortable business, charging \$1.50 for a dinner almost identical in every respect to the one they now get for \$1.00, and charging \$1.75 for a dinner somewhat more elaborate—you know, chicken or steak—with an appetizer to start. On that basis, they were feeding fair-sized crowds on week-ends, but doing very little business during the week.

"I suppose the Board of Governors came to expect a deficit in the dining-room at the end of the fiscal year, just as a matter of unavoidable course. At any rate, when a new House Committee chairman was elected and called me in last spring, he told me he was more interested in satisfying the members than he was in showing a profit in the dining-room. 'Give them,' he told me, 'a dollar dinner at night.' 'It won't be good enough,' I told him. 'You can't serve a good one for less than \$1.50.' 'Then give them a \$1.50 dinner for a dollar,' he told me. 'What I want to see is satisfied members. If we can lure them out here by serving extra fine dinners, they'll patronize the other departments as well, and the increased business in those departments will more than make up any

loss we have to take on the dining-room.'

"That's why the North Shore members are getting a \$1.50 meal for \$1.00. And I wish you could have seen how business picked up! We haven't the figures yet on just how many meals we served, but you'll get an idea when I tell you that the total volume of business was greater this year with \$1.00 meals than it had ever been with \$1.50 meals.

"It was nice to be told by my chairman that he expected me to suffer a loss in the dining room, but I didn't think that was a permit to be extravagant; instead I looked around for some way to economize. I found it in the store-room.

"It was in the matter of food control. Before this year, if a new delivery of, say, tomatoes was made, the new lot were liable to be put down on top of whatever supply of old ones we had, and when the chef came to the storeroom for tomatoes, he naturally took from the top of the pile. There was a lot of spoilage of fresh vegetables and other perishables because of this.

"I took a young fellow who was hired to do odd jobs around the clubhouse and made him storekeeper. It was up to him to keep track of our food supplies and see that the old stuff was used up before the new was touched. The result was that only once in a while did we have to throw anything out. In fact, the garbage man came into my office this fall and complained that he couldn't afford to come out unless there was more garbage for him to pick up!

"Then I got together with my chef. In all my experience as a manager, I have never had such a valuable man; I'd be lost without him. It wasn't hard, with his help, to work out a system on the dinners. We decided to serve only one ready entree each night, and let the other choice be quick items—cooked to order. To give a wide choice and at the same time standardize the menu, there was to be one egg dish, one fish, one grilled meat, and one cold plate daily. There was to be choice of an appetizer or soup, there were two fresh vegetables, a tasty fresh salad, and a wide choice of desserts.

"The advantage of only one ready dish is that there was very little leftover. It was easier to prepare the right quantity and the leftover could be served the next day; if there were two or three leftovers, it would be hard to work them all in on the following day."

Come Out
some evening
and try our

\$1⁰⁰ Dinner
at the club



Our House
Committee
claim that the
dinner served is as
good, if not better,
than any \$1.50
Dinner you
ever ate

North Shore advertises its dollar dinner
on back of its weekly house-organ.

Sweitzer reached into a folder and handed me a sample menu. It happened to be the one for Thursday, August 15th, and I was assured that it was typical of the dollar dinners he has served all year. It read:

Choice of

Assorted Canape
Chicken Broth with Noodles
Cold Consomme in Jelly

Mixed Olives *Garden Radishes*

Choice of

Broiled Lake Trout with Lemon Butter
Omelette with Fresh Peaches
Grilled Loin Veal Chop, Grilled Tomatoes
Grilled Half Roast Milk-fed Squab
Chicken with Apple Sauce
Roast Prime Ribs of Beef, au Jus
Cold Ox-Tongue, Swiss Cheese, and Jelly

New Spinach in Cream *Rissole Potato*

Fresh Vegetable Salad, Mayonnaise

Apple Pie *Lemon Meringue Pie*
Jelly Roll a la Mode *Ice Cream*
Fresh Peach Sundae

Cantaloupe *Honey Dew* *Watermelon*

Coffee, Tea, Milk, Ice Tea

"You'll notice," Sweitzer pointed out, "that I have two ready dishes on the list, but that is because I had some roast beef left over. The day's dish is the half squab chicken; another day it might be steak. My food cost is 51 cents.

"Outside of packaged goods and staples, I do all purchasing and I think I buy as cheaply as any of my manager friends. Everything must be of finest quality. As an example, I pay 37 cents for beef where I could get it for 32; but the five cents extra assures the best and North Shore, as a result, has a reputation for the finest roast beef in the district.

"It is a dining-room policy that a member can have a second helping if he wants it of appetizers, soups, vegetables and desserts and we'll give him more meat if he asks for it. The members don't abuse this policy and only ask for more if they actually want more. In the end it all averages out, because ten people will tell the waiter to omit the soup or the salad or dessert to one who will ask for a second helping. And it goes a long way toward keeping the members happy to know that there is more in the kitchen if they want it."

To get down to figures, Sweitzer started the spring with a loss of approximately

\$3,000, caused by the club's decision late last fall not to remain open during the winter months, a practice of former years. Sweitzer had not expected the close-down order and had kept his full crew at work. The deficit was composed almost entirely of salaries.

There were some added salaries this year. When Sweitzer put that odd-job boy in charge of the storeroom, the boy's salary was charged against the dining-room, and earlier in the season, the club decided beverage sales in the locker-rooms belong to the dining department and therefore the wages of the "bartender" who dispenses carbonated waters and ginger ale was chargeable to the dining-room. Ordinarily, beverage profits would have covered this man's salary adequately, but about the middle of last summer clubs in the Chicago district were forced by authorities temporarily to discontinue beverage sales in locker-rooms. In North Shore's case, the beverage sales loss amounted to over \$2,000.

Yet despite the \$3,000 red figures with which he began operations this spring and the added salaries, Sweitzer finished the year with the dining-room showing only \$1,000 loss. Had he been able to start from scratch, his department would have showed \$2,000 profit.

Next year, beginning without the opening deficit, he expects to do even better. "It takes time," he explained, "to convince members there isn't a nigger in the wood-pile when you offer them food as good as we gave them and only charge a dollar. But they're sold on the facts now, and next summer I expect to see a lot more members bringing their families out for dinner, especially on week-ends and maid's-day-out. That's going to mean increased business and increased profits."

FOR the most part, course architecture and construction should follow along conservative lines; efforts directed towards blending the natural features into the layout are better than creating a course topography which is at variance with the surrounding terrain. The use of striking physical features artificially produced, involving the removal of large quantities of earth, is not favored. True, some large operations must be undertaken in the matter of clearing through timber and rock, but this work is not for the purpose of creating architectural adornment.—C. A. Tregillus.