

Upkeep and Pro Vital to Free Course Success

By WM. H. LIVIE

DURING the past twelve years pay-as-you-play courses have been built in every type of town, small or large. I dare say in the next ten years you will be able to take your clubs, start at Chicago and play in every town until you arrive in New York, without taking a bus or train to reach each adjoining course.

Looking over some of the courses in the different cities I am surprised to see how loose they are operated, especially some courses run by city officials where the political theme is dominant. Still they wonder why they lose the business they had to start with. Some claim other pay-as-you-play courses have hurt them, while others attempt to explain loss of play by stating their steady patrons join private clubs.

But every year thousands of new players are taking up the game and they must have courses. They probably have their choice of several public courses operated by the city where they can play for 25 cents to \$1 per day. When they have played a year or so they will play on the best pay-as-you-play course in the same city, which will cost them from 75 cents to \$2. This is a small amount when you consider what you pay for bowling, pool and many other indoor games.

Need Highest Grade Pros

If operators would engage only very competent professionals—those who are past masters in all branches of the game and who understand the public and know how to handle them—they will find their pros valuable assets.

You will often hear this remark about many of the public courses: "If you play that course you had better wear a helmet or you will be kissing the daisies." No golfer can enjoy the game when he has to watch golf balls flying at all angles.

This trouble can be remedied if those in charge of the course will instruct all employes on the rules and etiquette of the game. Many courses post rules and regulations, but most of them are never read.

The public course is patronized by many beginners who barely know a tee from a green. Private courses are fortunate in having their members taught by the pro or having played on other courses for several years. Players who have been taught by competent instructors are usually acquainted with the most important rules. If they are not, I think they have been taught by a poor instructor.

A competent starter on the tees knows when a player is a beginner. He usually instructs him on the rule that he must wait until the party in front is out of reach before he hits the ball. The beginner also should be advised of other playing practices such as replacement of divots, to remember that a putting green is not a tee nor a fairway, and he should never hit a ball on one with any other club than a putter, that he should let players go through if he is slow, etc. I would have these important rules printed on small sheets that the starter or ranger can give the players.

Watch Maintenance

Public courses have lots of wear and tear during a season's play. This is hard on upkeep costs, so some operators neglect this part of the business and suffer a falling off of play. No maintenance detail can be overlooked. Divots are one of the most annoying problems. I got this divot problem whipped at one course by sending all caddies around the course every morning with a captain for every twelve. Each group was assigned to a hole for divot replacement. This plan taught the boys the habit of putting divots into place. They also told players who did not have caddies and who neglected this duty that all turf must be replaced. Players use to remark that it was surprising how the course looked with so many players on it every day. Try this plan and see the results.

Many players when they miss a small putt lose their tempers. They naturally take it out on the green by digging a piece out by throwing a club or kicking the turf.

It was a usual sight for the greenkeeper to see evidence of this abuse every morning. I used the caddie system again. When a caddie saw this done he would instruct the caddies ahead. They would carry this message to the office. Before the player had played the last hole I would be there to tell him what he had done, much to his surprise. A little quiet and unobtrusive talk on how hard it was to get the green back in shape put an end to careless use of the greens.

To remedy the overcrowding on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, spread your play over a period of hours, charging different prices at different hours. For instance, on Saturday afternoon you get a rush period at 12 or 1 o'clock when everybody wants to get on the tees. Starting a foursome every five minutes on No. 1 and No. 10 tees for two hours gives you a total of over 200 players. After they have left the tee you can reduce your rate for the rest of the afternoon. This will reduce the rush period.

A good rule is to see that all players have a bag of clubs. Don't allow two players to play out of the same bag. This is one of the worst evils on a fee golf course and keeps other players from getting ahead. Keep all rough grass clipped close so players can find their balls easily.

I would suggest to cities which plan building golf courses for public play should build a small course for juniors, women players and beginners.

Daily fee course business is sure to benefit from school instruction like that being given in the high schools of Cleveland. Several times a week instructors give instruction in group form, which is a good start in the right direction. This gives the girls who work in offices an easy start toward playing golf. This feminine part of the golf market is developing rapidly in numbers as well as in playing ability.

Schools and Tours Help Pro Golf

By FRANK LEWIS,

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MANY pros will, no doubt, be astounded to know that the public schools of Fort Smith, have this year arranged to allow all pupils who take up golf, not only credits, the same as they get in any other athletic sport, but allow

them to get out an hour earlier in the evening than they otherwise would.

This is arranged by the local golf course keeping record of the school children who report at the course. This record is turned over to the school for their credits and to account for pupils' absence from school. It is necessary, however, that all pupils who take advantage of this opportunity to have a letter from their parents consenting to it.

Last season when school started, I advised the school authorities that I would give free lessons to all pupils and women school teachers. I went two nights a week to the school's gymnasium where the pupils and the women school teachers would assemble. They have nets in the gymnasium. You would be impressed by the interest shown in these lessons, not only by the pupils but by the teachers.

Schools Big Pro Field

I am firmly convinced that the greatest field for the pro in the future is to encourage golf in the schools. I have already had several very favorable propositions from universities on account of advertising I have received in giving group lessons, and I am of the opinion that more of the pros who have clubs through the north will be able to secure good positions during the winter months at the various universities and high schools. If you will stop to consider it you can readily see that every pro will have a year around job as soon as the various high schools, colleges, and universities adopt golf. You may think you are wasting time by giving a few free lessons to groups of school children, but I am in position to assure you that it will bring you more profits than the same amount of time spent in any other way.

There are 12 towns in this vicinity that have organized themselves into what is known as the Two States Golf League. They have a meeting every week until each of the towns has entertained the organization, and then it continues so long as the towns invite the membership. Last year it ran about five months without a single week of interruption. They called off their meetings for two weeks and made a good will tour covering some ten or twelve towns. It was a unique way of pulling off a tour and not only did this jaunt do the game a great deal of good but it proved very beneficial in bringing the people of the town in this section of the country closer together.