

# Golfdom

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## Bank-Backed Eastern Course Is Economy Model

By AL HAMMOND

TO SEE real business management of a country club you must look to a moderate priced club operated for the whole family and arrayed with facilities which may run somewhat shy of those of the ultra-exclusive and expensive clubs, yet nevertheless furnish members with plenty of reasons for proudly referring to their club. In such clubs every cent must do the limit of duty and every detail must be so planned and carried out that the club is a distinguished enterprise, instead of being "just another golf club."

Daily-fee courses have made a great contribution to the business advance of golf by showing how a golf plant can be operated at a good profit through competent, coordinated management. But there are a lot of golfers who desire, in addition to the thrift of daily-fee golf, the atmosphere and prestige of a private club, and the Bankers' C. C., Ambler, Pa., in supplying this happy combination, stands out as a valuable object lesson to the golf field.

The Bankers' club started off with the right financial plan. The club financing was underwritten by a group of bankers who wanted to supply country club facilities to employees of their respective institutions and to the families of these employees. To these captains of finance the country club was a pleasure plant, and to operate any plant at a profit you have to have enough customers for the output. That's where the bankers were right at

the very beginning. A lot of clubs figure this axiom out in the post-mortem when the reasons for the assessment are being determined. The Bankers' C. C. has 657 members. That's enough so the enterprise could get going without having nurse drop it on its head in babyhood and compel it to carry the bodily and mental disfigurement of interest charges on a big initial borrowing all through its life. The club has an 18-hole course in good condition.

Now you'll say, "How can an 18-hole course take care of 657 members?" The answer is that of this membership there are only 345 golf memberships. There are 265 social memberships and 57 tennis memberships. Members pay only for the part of the club's facilities they use. Members who do not have a golf membership can play golf during the week for 75 cents a round. Those who do not have tennis memberships can play tennis at a cost of 25 cents per person per set. There also is a small charge for the club dances.

### On "Cash and Carry" Basis

All charges for the use of club facilities, meals, etc., are collected in cash, thus relieving the operation of much clerical detail, risk of unpaid accounts, and providing ample operating capital.

At least 80 per cent of the members must be connected with the banks that launched the enterprise, thus assuring a high stand-

ard of membership, a harmonious business interest, and control remaining with the originators of the club.

When the club was started there was, in addition to the classes of membership the club has at present, a limited founder membership for the life of the club, permitting the use of the social features of the club only, and an honorary founder membership allowing the use of all of the club facilities. The limited membership cost \$200 and the honorary membership \$400.

**How Costs Run**

The classes and costs of membership now available are shown on the accompanying membership application blank.

side plant. C. Roy English is assistant manager.

Pros and greenkeepers are not exactly ecstatic about this general manager idea, and as a pro I can understand their present lack of enthusiasm. When the day comes that the general management idea is founded primarily on the idea of thoroughly businesslike operation of the club instead of on the general manager's idea of drawing down the major part of the available salary and making heads of the professional and greenkeeping departments poorly paid subordinates without any license for initiative or pride in the plant, then general management will come into its

.....19....  
 THE BANKERS COUNTRY CLUB,  
 2d Floor—1520 Locust Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

GENTLEMEN:

I wish to apply for the following membership in the **Bankers Country Club**:

<input type="checkbox"/> General Membership Annual Dues	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$35 \$
Plus <input type="checkbox"/> Golf Privilege Annual Dues	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$40	<input type="checkbox"/> Family (for 2)	\$60 \$
Plus <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis Privilege Annual Dues	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$10	<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$15 \$

Total \$

I enclose my check for \$30 initiation fee and agree to pay for my membership, plus the necessary taxes,  in cash, or  25% in cash and balance 25% 30 days, 25% 60 days and 25% 90 days.

Should my application not be accepted by the Membership Committee, it is understood that you will refund my \$30 to me.

Name .....  Address.....  
Please Print  
 (If Family Membership) Also following: Position.....  
 .....  Institution.....  
 ..... Signature.....

Designate with a cross (x) which of above is desired as mailing address.

The price scale for meal service is moderate although Frank R. Sykes, general manager of the club, vigorously maintains the quality of the menu cannot be excelled. He attributes this moderate priced meal service profit to the elimination of the elaborate menu that many clubs think they must have. A choice between two meats and two poultry items is available for the \$1.50 dinner at the club. There are popular 60-cent and \$1.00 lunches served in the clubhouse and a 50-cent lunch served in the locker-room. The usual a la carte items are available and on these the club makes a profit commensurate with the profit risk involved.

**Management Plan**

The whole plant is under the general management of Sykes, in whom are invested the powers of the committees. He works with the president and board of directors and with Jock Melville, who is professional and superintendent of the out-

own.

As it is now, I don't believe there are twenty men in the country who are competent general managers of golf clubs. Frank Sykes, however, has proved that he is one of them. He has the knowledge of the business in sound and broad manner. He knows that the problems of the outside plant call for all that an able, hard-working man can give to them, so Melville and Sykes make a great team, with the diminutive former Minneapolis pro making good on a well paying pro-greenkeeper job because he is doing the part of the work he can do best, and Sykes is handling the office end and organization business contact with the officials and members.

**Plan for Future Jobs**

From the pro viewpoint, I might suggest that this general management idea deserves watching. There is no more reason for the steward becoming the general manager than there is for the pro or greenkeeper

of today coming into this job, if they are qualified by education, ability and (by no means least) the temperament to take an accurate, broad view of the situation and harmoniously coordinate all phases of the club's business.

Because this type of club is so certainly due for growth, especially under the wing of business enterprises that, like the Philadelphia banks, can profit from the wholesome, inexpensive social contacts of their employees, GOLFDOM'S readers undoubtedly will be interested in the high lights of the Bankers C. C. plant and operation as given in Sykes' own words.

### Visions Big Field

Mr. Sykes remarks:

"There are many people in medium circumstances who are now playing golf and find the pay-as-you-play courses so crowded that they don't enjoy playing on them. The initiation and dues of most private clubs are more than they can afford, therefore I am positive that the field for the medium priced course, something between the price of a pay-as-you-play course and the private course, is unlimited.

"One of the features of this club that has proven very successful is that we have made it a family club for the married members. We have a wonderful clubhouse with large terraces, beautiful lawns with plenty of old shade. The terraces and lawns have plenty of comfortable chairs where the wives of members can relax. We also have installed a children's playground equipped with swings, playhouse, sand piles and teeter-totters, etc. You can imagine how things are changed at the married golfer's home now that he can bring the family with him. You, I know, have heard the remark by golfers, either in the locker room or the clubhouse, 'I had a dickens of a time to get away from the family.' I know I have. You would be surprised how the family facilities have helped our dining room; members bring their families to remain at the club all day.

"Our property consists of 209 acres, situated on the Welch road outside of



Clubhouse of the Bankers C. C.

Ambler, Pa., 18½ miles from Philadelphia. It was formerly the McKean estate. We have an 18-hole golf course, tennis courts and a large, modern baseball field. An old-fashioned swimming hole was constructed. It is 50x100 ft., located in front of the clubhouse, with a depth ranging from 3 to 9 ft., having a large sand beach. There is no charge for its use. We also have bridle paths and a trap-shooting lodge.

"The clubhouse is of the English villa type, built of brick. It has 30 rooms of which 15 are attractive sleeping rooms for the use of members for week-ends or larger holidays at reasonable rates. There are special rates by the week or month. Joining the clubhouse are two large terraces totaling 60x130 ft. with a terraza dance floor 35x50 ft. This affords ample space for outdoor dancing and dining in the summer. I might add here that we have a ballroom in the clubhouse that is 40x60 ft. where weekly dances are held during the fall, winter and spring. Summer dances are held twice a week; all are wonderfully well attended. The charge is nominal and we serve a light supper at 11 p. m. for which there is no additional charge.

"All our food prices are reasonable to correspond with our dues, and the dining room showed a very handsome profit.

"We have a president, secretary, treasurer and a board of directors. I have always contended that committees were one of the main reasons for country clubs showing in the red, as happens with the greatest percentage of them. There is not one single business man member of a country club who would stand for committees telling him how to operate his business. The operation of a country club is a business the same as his, therefore why not operate country clubs the same as any business?

"Jock Melville is our professional and has absolute charge of the course, in fact is our superintendent. Melville is not only a very good teacher but is thoroughly conversant with course conditioning.