



Cherry Hill's clubhouse has private course facilities for fee players.

Wagner Boys Fill Their Fee-Course Through Smart Promotion Work

By JACK FULTON, Jr.

A DAILY-FEE course operator can do one of two things: sit back and wait for the natural attractions of his layout to build volume business for him, or go out after this business aggressively. Time was when the first policy did the trick, but with the rapid increase in the number of pay-as-you-play links particularly in the metropolitan centers, it is becoming more and more necessary for an operator to hunt out the fee-course players in their homes and places of business and "sell" them on the idea of patronizing his layout in preference to the rival one down the pike a piece.

Chicago has progressed about as fast in daily-fee facilities as any metropolitan center in the United States, the number of pay-as-you-play establishments numbering well over 40 at the present time, with several more under construction or planned. Since each of the courses is comfortably filled on week-ends it would seem that the operators were sitting pretty, but except at those layouts satisfied with this volume of play, considerable effort must be made if a given course is to attract more players than its neighboring links. This effort takes the form of billboards,

newspaper advertising, direct-mail letter campaigns and paid solicitors. A few of the more aggressive course owners are using radio to call attention to the attractions of their courses.

Course Result of Market Slump.

One of the most skillfully publicized of the Chicago fee layouts is Cherry Hill, operated by Percy and Alvin Wagner at Flossmoor, a suburb some 35 minutes out on the electrified Illinois Central suburban lines. These two young men are real estate and subdivision operators who, when the real estate market went native several years ago, were smart enough to construct a better than average 18-hole golf course and a clubhouse equal to most private clubs on a piece of property they had purchased prior to the real estate crash with the intent of subdividing. With market conditions on the down-grade, the property was destined to lie idle for some years as a home-site proposition, so the Wagners pitched in and converted it into a golf course.

During the first two years of its operation, before the golf course had matured, play was light. Golfers naturally preferred



(Left) Selling courtesy card at bait rate assures purchasers' repeat business.

(Right) Note conditions on back of Cherry Hill courtesy card under which reduced rates are effective.

The member whose name appears on the face of this card is entitled to all the privileges of Cherry Hill Golf Club, including course, club house, lockers, showers etc, upon payment of the following fees.

Daily \$1.00 - - - - After 4 P. M. .50
 Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays \$1.00
 Replays on Saturdays, Sundays, Holidays .50
 Time Reservation - - - .25 each

Ticket will be punched once for every fee paid. Each sixth fee will be complimentary. This card must be presented to obtain these conditions.

This is your club membership card. As a member you are subject to the rules and regulations of Cherry Hill Golf Club, owned and operated by Flossmoor Lodge, Inc.

CLUB PHONE - HOMEWOOD 1240
 EXECUTIVE OFFICE - FAIRFAX 2000



(Left) Women players save 25 cents a round by buying this card for \$5. The \$5 goes for prizes.

the older daily-fee spots. But today, due to consistent plugging and intelligent operation, Cherry Hill boasts a volume of play that is the envy of many fee-course owners of the district. How this has been accomplished is explained by Percy Wagner, as follows:

Concentrate on Logical Sales Zone.

"The mistake many fee-course owners make," he says, "is to waste effort trying to

attract players from districts naturally tributary to another course. One of our basic policies at Cherry Hill is to confine all our solicitation and publicity to the part of Chicago's south side within a mile on either side of the Illinois Central's suburban lines. If we can get our share of the golfers in that district, the rest of Chicago can play its golf anywhere it wants.

"By that, I don't mean to give the impression that all of the players who come

to Cherry Hill use the trains to bring them from their homes. As a matter of fact less than 25% of them come that way; most of them drive out in autos. But we feel that our market is much more closely concentrated along the railroad than in the south side as a whole.

"We have about a dozen billboards in good spots along the railroad right-of-way and about as many more along the main highways to the property. We think this advertising is worth while and brings us quite a few players. But it is incidental to our main sales effort which takes the form of personal interviews with golfers.

Two Salesmen Employed.

"We have two solicitors on our payroll who do nothing all week but talk Cherry Hill to golfers. They call at offices, punch doorbells of apartment houses and homes, visit manufacturing plants, and dicker with hotels. Unless they find a golfer, they make no selling effort. 'Are you a golfer?' is their opening remark. If the answer is yes, the men swing immediately into a sales talk on the attractions of Cherry Hill. If the answer is no, the salesman wastes no time on that individual.

"Daily-fee course players are always interested in any proposition that will permit them to play at reduced rates, so our solicitors carry with them a supply of what we call 'Courtesy Cards.'

"The card, which costs the golfer \$5.00, entitles him to play 25 rounds at Cherry Hill upon payment of a straight \$1.00 green fee. The ticket is punched once for every fee paid and each sixth round is complimentary.

"The \$1.00 fee which holders of these cards pay per round is the same as non-card holders pay on week days, but is a saving on Saturday afternoons, when we charge \$1.50, and on Sundays and holidays, when we charge \$2.00. A golfer using up his card entirely on Sundays will save \$25, less the original \$5 fee, or \$20 net. In addition he will earn the right to play five additional complimentary rounds, representing further saving to him.

Why Courtesy Cards Pay.

"However, despite this apparent loss in income to us, the cards are good business. In the first place, the Courtesy Cards are not sold to individual golfers; they must organize their friends into a group of ten or more in order to be eligible. A golfer will work his head off lining up his friends for this proposition just to save that \$20 himself . . . and we gain not less

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Trenton, N. J.

than seven or eight regular patrons, who have become such because of the importunities of a friend and who would have been more often than not unapproachable by our salesmen.

"Then, too, 25 rounds of golf in a season is more than the average fee-course player will play, and the fewer rounds he plays the nearer he is to paying the regular established rates; remember that original \$5.00 he paid over for his card.

"Many a prospective card-buyer kicks at having to line up ten of his friends, saying that is too many, but we stick pretty close to the requirement. Our salesmen use judgment in the matter and occasionally let in a group of six or eight on that basis, if they feel that 6 or 8 are all that can be secured through this particular prospect.

Go After Women Strong.

"In addition to the Courtesy Cards, we have another card which we issue to women, on payment of a \$5.00 fee, which entitles them to play, week-days only, upon payment of a 75c fee. The big appeal of this card to the women is that the \$5.00 is not kept by us but is turned over to a committee of women players to be spent

for prizes. They have organized a club of their own, have regular weekly competitions and take as much interest in their activities as the women at a private club.

"This policy of playing up to the women golfers certainly pays. Turning over the five-dollar card fee to them to be spent for prizes is the lure that brings them in; they feel that they will at least have a crack at getting their money back in the form of some prize or other and meanwhile their golf has been bought at 25c under the regular daily green-fee.

"Well, that's true—we have cut our rate, but you ought to see how these women work for us, bringing in new women players from among their friends. Already this season, there are more than 30 signed up for our women's club and by mid-season there will be over fifty. Most of them will play at least one round a week. Figure up the income the ladies bring us and you will realize why we turn back so much money to them for prizes.

"We have two other kinds of memberships. One is a stockholder's card, given to anyone buying \$100 or more stock in Flossmoor Lodge, Inc., the holding company for the golf course. Such stock-

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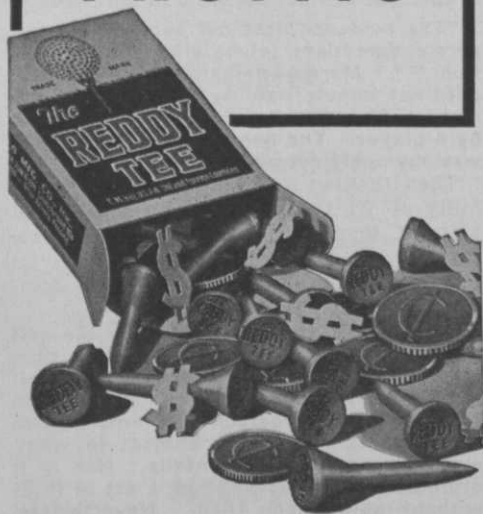


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holders share in any profits the course may earn and are entitled to play at any time for a straight \$1.00 fee.

"The other is an annual membership, which costs \$80. Holders of annual memberships pay no green-fees. Other members of their immediate family are given similar privileges on further payment of \$20 for each person."

One of the most profitable sources of week-day income for a daily-fee course comes from trade tournaments, and the Wagners go out after this type of play aggressively. They have compiled a list of all the corporations and trade associations in Chicago who have held private golf tournaments in the past couple of years, and one or the other of the Wagner brothers camps on the trail of each of these prospects until Cherry Hill is chosen or they lose the business to some other course.

As a result, Cherry Hill is the scene of a trade tournament almost every week-day during the season. The clubhouse has facilities to handle large groups in fine fashion and every effort is made to make the day so enjoyable that the group will return the following season or possibly repeat the event at some later date that same year.

Percy and Alvin Wagner are smart operators and never overlook a bet to boost the play at Cherry Hill. As a result, the course is becoming increasingly popular each season and has achieved an enviable reputation with the daily-fee golfers of Chicago's south side.

HADDEN SYSTEM CARES FOR GREENS WATERING

Alhambra, Calif. — Hadden automatic sprinkling system is making an entry into the golf field, especially for green, tee and approach watering. It is a concealed pop-up system with the head of the nozzle three inches below the surface of the ground. Water is not released from the nozzle until water pressure has raised the nozzle well above the surface, thus eliminating possibility of washing out the adjoining ground. Volume of the sprinkler may be regulated from one to 10 gallons a minute. Hydraulic action also cares for replacement of the nozzle in its concealed position.

Complete details of the system will be supplied on request by the Hadden Automatic Sprinkler Co., Alhambra.