

Gallery Revival Stirs Playing Pro To Tournament Planning

By HERB GRAFFIS

Fresh Meadow C. C., June 25.

A FEW MINUTES ago Gene Sarazen patted into its snug harbor his 286th stroke of the National Open tournament. The new champion came up the last hole surrounded by the wildest gallery seen at any American golf tournament, a gallery that pushed around the marshals, the coppers, thundered and stomped over the club officials and stampeded onto the eighteenth green, leaving the champion a space the size of a telephone booth for his concluding putt.

On the tanned pans of the distinguished Tack Ramsay, Bob Cutting, Herb Jacques and others of the U. S. G. A. presiding elders, there are refined, but ear-to-ear grins as the cashiers count up the gate receipts. The gallery income brought reminiscences of those good old days when Robert the "Mint," of points south, was drawing them in.

There have been plenty of other minor indications that golf interest this year is defying the depression and that exhibition and tournament golf can be played on the Field of the Cloth of Gold.

Smart and foresighted playing pros have observed the signals of fair weather ahead and have started thinking seriously about taking advantage of this prospect. Earnest confabs in the locker-room at Fresh Meadow indicate that something definite will be done soon about the tournament bureau activities of the P. G. A. for the coming year.

Just who will head the tournament bureau is the major problem confronting the P. G. A. officials and the playing pros. Bob Harlow, the master impresario whose efforts brought the 1931-32 winter season of the playing pros into a substantial success when the swing was threatened with almost complete collapse, now is handling L. A. Young's stable of talent. Harlow knows more of what it's all about than the rest of the country combined, but even if available on a loan basis for tourney management probably would be unaccept-

able because of any manufacturing connection. Francis Powers and Hal Sharkey, newspapermen, have been mentioned by the playing pros as men for the job and others whose business demands preclude the possibility of acceptance have been approached to handle the situation.

Sales Management Needed

The playing pros realized what they need now is not only publicity but energetic advance selling and sales management. Despite positive evidence of gallery interest being high, there probably will be some of the tournament fixtures go by the boards unless the people who have conducted these affairs are given some treatment calculated to restore the enthusiasm that was responsible for the establishment of these tournaments. In this connection it is obvious that one of the first moves is for the PGA to get its sectional officials located in winter tournament territory active in a tournament selling campaign.

This isn't the only detail in which the tournament plans should take shape by beginning at home. Efforts of southern California professionals had a vital part in the inauguration of the winter tournament schedule and these able pros probably will play an important role in whatever plans are made by President Charles Hall, Business Administrator Gates, Chairman Alex Pirie of the Tournament committee and others of the pro association.

To be blunt about it, the other detail where home work of the pros should begin is with the players. Pro tournament golf is a tough business for the pro business man. He is the simon-pure amateur in reality, for his expenses are not paid and he has to gamble for his income. But actual figures on last season's schedule show that 25 of the touring pros won \$1,000 or over and that figure is better than staying at home and having all of the money go out. For those stars who constitute gallery attraction and make the

show there was a very respectable income and no reason for complaint considering general business conditions. The youngsters who make up the rest of the field are in there mostly for experience and willing to pay for it. Without them, too, there wouldn't be a tournament, but they play along like good boys and cause no concern.

A Show to Sell

People want to see the stars in action and if the stars have to be kissed and caressed to appear there will be no show. Folks are not teasing stars in any field of endeavor to take the dough of the common people these days. If the pro golf stars doubt this, let them talk to stage or movie actors or to opera singers.

The time of troupers has returned. Golf stars who realize that the show must go on and the curtain must go up at the right time have the destiny of next winter's tournament golf in their hands. If they want to be temperamental about appearances, about starting times, about pairings and the rest of the items, they have that privilege. This is a free country. But it isn't free in the matter of giving a golf show for nothing. The gallery pays to see the players and the players owe the gallery something for financing the show.

No Preaching

GOLFDOM has no space for preaching in its pages. Considerable association with professional athletes has impressed on us that pro golfers are well above the average of paid performers in other sports, both as gentlemen and scholars. But some of the boys are a bit too much inclined to be inconsiderate of the public. They forget the public is what made them, regardless of the excellence of their games. Perhaps some of them forget the public can unmake them and do it quickly because the nation quickly tires of its heroes. If you question that, review the publicity given to the Argentine importation, Jurado. Novelty, a good game and consideration of the gallery and press has put him into a quick money-making spot. In addition to his \$5,000 guarantee for the American tour, other dollars will go home to parking space in the pampas, as his exhibition dates are in great demand and draw well. He supplied the new hero. Now that Sarazen has set up a record Gene is in position to show the boys how a hero can turn his fame into fortune by giving the

public what it wants. Upon his stocky shoulders and in his active mind now rests much responsibility for the immediate future of tournament golf.

One of the first things the tournament pros have to do in preparing for a good winter season is to agree on some form of a guarantee of appearance that can be used by people selling the show. Run-outs have made it tough to sell shows in places where promoters and populace formerly were hot for tournament golf. Possibly some basis of guaranteeing a certain number of star performers according to the prize money should be worked out. To such an agreement the pros might make among themselves there would have to be penalties attached. Some of the pros have suggested making up a fund to partially finance the tournament bureau, with refunds to participants in the fund out of the gallery income after a split with local promoters. Deductions from this amount paid in by the player in case of his non-appearance except for illness, might help to get the boys to show.

Troupers Required

The public will go for the show this fall and winter but will insist in advance that the performers be there. Fellows like veterans Al Espinosa and John Golden and youngsters Horton Smith and Harry Cooper, who appear, play and cause no anxiety or regrets to the local tournament promoters, have established a model, not that they are the only ones by a long way. And after the fellows have played, let them depart in peace and plenty without a sad wake of criticism of greens, locker-rooms or anything else, even though conditions haven't been 100%.

Caruso, Mantell and Ethel Barrymore collected fortunes in the tank towns as well as at the terminals, so why should the spirit of mortal be too proud to make it pleasant for pros to take some jack at the outlying precincts?

FROM JOHN DREHER'S great golf section in the Seattle (Wash.) *Sunday Times* we learn of an event that is worthy of adoption on the event schedules of many clubs. It's a gymkhana between two teams of the Allied Bridge league of Seattle, put on at the Earlington (Wash.) G. C. Program includes golf, lawn bowling, soccer, dinner and a wind-up of bridge. Scots and Irish form opposing teams.