

Battle Roster Slump With New Features on Program

By JACK FULTON, JR.

CONSCIENTIOUS membership chairmen have been sitting up nights trying to work out plans attractive enough to entire new faces into the ranks to replace today's vacancies on the club rosters. At some clubs, memberships are being given away to anyone who will assume the annual dues—but this is only being done at clubs unduly panicky as a result of inadequate financial foresight in other seasons. Other organizations are permitting any member, who cannot continue to pay dues, to retain his equity but "farm out" his privileges to some non-member who will assume the dues payments. Still other clubs are throwing open their course and clubhouse facilities to the general public, figuring the boost in green-fee income will be worth any inconvenience these public golfers may cause the regular members.

Meanwhile, the clubs' usual budgets have been slashed. The green-chairman is expected to maintain the course this year on less than the usual appropriation. The house-chairman has been instructed to see that as many employes as possible are eliminated consistent with good service, and has frequently reduced salaries of those employes who remain. The entertainment head has been asked to schedule fewer parties, and if the club formerly has used a nine-piece orchestra for its dances, to plan to get along with a six-man aggregation this season. The sports and pastimes committee has been told to buy fewer prizes.

Wasteful Spending Shown Up

The net result of all this budget paring will be constructive in one regard if in no other—it will demonstrate forcibly and plainly how much money the clubs have wasted in former years under unbusiness-like administrations. It will show the clubs the difference between carefully planned expenditures and wasteful appropriations granted simply because the club, "organized not for profit," happened to have some surplus funds on hand.

But with all this retrenchment going on, GOLFDOM, from its seat on the players'

bench, wonders if at least some of the clubs are not carrying economy too far. Is there a level of service and convenience to members below which a given club may not sink without seriously affecting the morale of the entire membership body, resulting in further member resignations?

Asking your members to get along with fewer locker-room boys is possibly good economy, but how is the move going to react on John Member himself when some hot Saturday evening this summer he finds he must wait 5 or 10 minutes with his tongue hanging out before the much over-worked locker crew can get around to ministering to his wants? John Member is paying the same dues he always has, and he expects to be waited on with the same efficiency as in the past. He likes the idea of economy—but when it encroaches on his comforts, John is going to set up a howl.

As another example, consider Henry Member, who joined the club more because his family wanted a place to exploit its social leanings than because he wanted an occasional golf game. Suppose the club decides a good economy move is to hold its dances and card parties every second week instead of weekly as in other seasons. What is Henry's reaction going to be? Undoubtedly a feeling that he's not getting as much for his money as formerly. Why not resign and join Bill Jones' club on the other side of town; the course isn't as good, but the club schedules dances weekly.

As a final example take Joe Member—one of those rabid golfers whose whole life is devoted to as many rounds of golf as his spare time will permit, and who is never to be found around the club except out on the course or in the locker-room. One day Joe misses a putt that he thinks should have gone down and in searching for an alibi discovers that the mower has left a little ridge of grass between the spot on which his ball had rested and the cup.

So Joe hunts up the green-chairman and starts balling the living daylights out of

this hard-working official, who explains that the little ridge of too-long grass is the fault of the greens mower; it doesn't cut as well as it used to, but the budget won't let him replace it with an efficient machine.

Is Joe Member going to take that excuse and like it? On the contrary, he's mighty liable to go over to Hedgerow Hills, where they keep their greens as Joe thinks greens should be kept.

Officers Must Defend Changes

Club officials are in for a tough year keeping their members happy. A dollar bill is supposed to buy a lot more today than it did a couple of seasons ago, but a club can hardly effect radical economies without reducing and simplifying the service a member gets for each dollar he spends at the club. This is particularly true of dues, which cannot be cut.

It seems to GOLFDOM the smartest way to combat this unavoidable misery of frequent member complaint is for the officials of the clubs to work on the members through the back door—in other words, let them complain, salve their injured feelings as much as possible, and meanwhile offset the damage such discontent may cause by offering in the various departments of the club more attractions than ever before, so that even though a member may be "disgusted with the way things are going" in one department, the joys and satisfaction he derives from his club life, taken as a whole, will make him think twice before making the radical move of resigning.

Costs Little to Add Features

Offering more attractions around the club than in the past does not necessarily mean that the club must make a heavy investment not covered by the budget. There are plenty of ways to boost member enjoyment costing not one penny, and there are a lot of other activities that can be started which call for some money to be spent, but which more than pay their own way.

Consider first the golf course. Is the club doing everything possible to boost the number of rounds of golf played? Has the sports and pastimes committee scheduled the customary cut-and-dried series of events for the coming season, or has it included some novelty events calculated to increase the golfers' attendance? There are over 50 different kinds of golf events;

clubs interested will find most of them listed and described in the March, 1929 issue of GOLFDOM*

For successful results, the mere listing of these novel events on the 1932 sports and pastimes schedule is not enough. The golf chairman and his committee will find it necessary to call the members' attention to events scheduled for the immediate future and to do a little selling work if necessary to assure good attendance. It is all worth the effort, because a crowd of participants generally guarantees any event being well received.

Many Entertainment Stunts

The entertainment committee can find endless opportunities for boosting member interest, and in this year of reduced entertainment budgets, there is extra need for intelligent thinking. Dance nights should be carefully planned in advance. Have some novel twist to each one—a masquerade; a cabaret evening (using home talent); schedule a joint dance with the members of a nearby club (details of splitting expenses and profits can be worked out); lucky number dances; midnight suppers.

Have you a movie nut at the club who has taken numerous shots of members around the course? Have him give a movie evening; members will come miles to see themselves on the screen. Augment his reels with some 16mm golf instruction pictures, which can be rented for a very nominal sum from your local movie supply house. With proper publicity and "build-up," this sort of an entertainment feature is sure-fire.

In the matter of games, much can be done. The growing popularity of contract bridge suggests that a one-night contract tournament would draw a crowd. One or another of the bridge enthusiasts around the club will know how such a tourney should be run and will enjoy taking charge of the event.

Another game that seems to appeal to club members, especially the women, is "keno," which is just another name for the old-time game of "lotto." Where clubs run the event, it is customary to sell the

*Brooks Brothers, Madison Avenue, New York City, once issued a little booklet on the subject entitled "A Book of Matches" and may still have a supply for distribution. The United States Rubber Co.'s golf ball sales department, Providence, R. I., also issued a booklet for general distribution. Two other sources are Spalding's Golf Guide and Fraser's International Golf Year Book.

cards at a dime each or three for a quarter, and the management deducts 10 per cent of each purse, awarding the balance of the pot to the holder of the lucky card. The weekly Friday night keno game at a Chicago district club last summer attracted over 100 players on several occasions, and the club's 10 per cent rarely ran under \$20. At the end of the season, this "take" was sufficient to schedule an extra party beyond that the entertainment budget would have allowed.

Ping-pong is rapidly coming into the good graces of the public after being neglected as a game for many years, and the smart club will make no mistake to invest in one or two tables and the necessary playing equipment. There is a fascination to the game that appeals to players and onlookers as well, and the younger patrons of the club will be especially enthusiastic. Buy a croquet set and set it up on a level piece of lawn in front of the club porch. In some clubs they have installed one or two horse-shoe pitching courts.

Other devices for expanding the attractions of the club and thereby increasing patronage will readily occur to officials, and provided the installation of the necessary equipment calls for little or no investment of club funds, the move will generally prove well worth the effort. Member interest will be aroused, member appreciation of the club will be improved, and the specter of wholesale resignations because the club is not giving the members their "money's worth" will disappear.

George Stumpp, Stumpp & Walter Chief, Is Dead

New York City.—George G. Stumpp, pres. of Stumpp & Walter Co., prominent golf course equipment and supply house died in a hospital here, Feb. 8, at the age of 59. Up to two weeks prior to his death he was at his desk supervising his large business and details of Stumpp & Walter's move to its new building.

Mr. Stumpp was born at Union Hill, N. J., the son and grandson of seedsmen. He grew up in the business and was one of its outstanding leaders at the time of his death. He started business in his father's seed store, now owned by his brother Otto. Later he worked for Peter Henderson and F. E. McAllister. Almost 35 years ago, on the discontinuance of the

McAllister business, Mr. Stumpp, his pal, Julian H. Walter and Henry Eicke, another McAllister employe borrowed money and opened the Stumpp & Walter Co. business which steadily flourished under able management until it became one of the largest enterprises of its kind.

The company maintained a steady growth since its start, enlarging office and warehouse quarters and taking on branch offices and nurseries as a result of a vigorously progressive policy that was an inherent part of George Stumpp's make-up. By one of those sad tricks of fate Mr. Stumpp died just a few days before the company moved into the splendid new building that long had been his ambition.

Mr. Stumpp is survived by his widow, formerly Emma Kohlmeyer; a son, George O. Stumpp, who is v. p. of Stumpp & Walters; a sister, Mrs. Charles Hahn; and his brother Otto.

Group Instruction Is 1932 Feature

SUCCESS of free group lessons for women and children during 1931 was so pronounced that the idea promises to be adopted by the majority of alert professionals during 1932.

Rarely do the circumstances prevent scheduling these classes as part of the pro services and the proposition works out to the advantage of the club as well as of the pro. In only a few instances have these classes failed to arouse and maintain lively interest. In those cases, the pros say, the group lesson idea was not presented and pushed properly by either the club or the pro.

Group lessons in 1931 were credited with having much to do with the continued growth of women's golf and satisfactory sales to women. Group lessons to the youngsters did not produce much actual business so far as the pro was concerned, but it helped considerably in getting the whole family out to the clubs for house business. One place where the kid classes did help the pros was in making the parents reluctant to buy elsewhere than at the pro shop because the pro was being enthusiastically boosted by the kids.

Free group lessons weekly for women and children were used effectively in membership campaigns last year and undoubtedly will be pushed in getting new members during 1932.