



"Department heads should play in tournaments to learn that courses are for golf." Gomer Simms teeing off during greenkeepers' tourney at Palos Verdes (Calif.) C. C.

# Departmental Jealousy Is Normal; It Also May Be Avoided

By ARTHUR LANGTON

**C**O-OPERATION is one of the most used and abused words current in the Western hemisphere. For this and other reasons the writer hesitates to use it in connection with the business of golf course maintenance, the other reason being that sincere co-operation between department heads on golf courses is practically non-existent. Of course, open antagonism and friction between the greenkeeper, professional, and manager is not always evident, yet true amity rarely exists between the three. For years they have maintained an attitude towards each other which in its more pacific moments might be termed one of armed neutrality, this in spite of the fact that individually they may be entirely satisfactory to the club clientele.

To one who has delved in the realm of social psychology this situation is in no sense unique. It is based upon a phenomena known as occupational egocentrism present in all professions, trades, and skilled occupations. A man regards as precious the means by which he gains a

livelihood, and he is apt to regard that means as more important than that of any other man. Among department heads on a golf course the situation is aggravated by the fact that the greenkeeper, pro, and house manager are all working from independent standpoints to achieve the same end—to make the player's golf more enjoyable. The greenkeeper knows that he is indispensable because there would be no golf without a place to play. The professional is sure that without his aid in teaching and illustrating the game it would be a complete flop. And the house manager is positive that were it not for the refining influence of the club house and the social life centering around it, golf would not have achieved its present cultural standing.

## Each Post Is Important.

All three are right; all three are justified in a certain pride of calling, for each is necessary to make a modern golf course successful. But when this egocentrism

leads to antagonism, implied if not open, then reason passes out of the picture. In these parlous times, petty prejudices must be forgotten in order that the golf course shall continue to exist. It is reasonable to suppose that where bickering and backbiting are current, the minimum of co-operation is maintained. There are plenty of instances where one of three department heads has had access to the ears of his employers and has convinced them that he was capable of filling the other two offices as well as his own. But usually, particularly in the larger clubs, the change has resulted in a decrease in efficiency. A man in such a position who should be concentrating upon the evening banquet is too apt to have his thoughts sidetracked by brown-patch and the intricacies of playing a spoon shot.

Tolerance is necessary. Perhaps it is only human after all for the greenkeeper and the manager to regard the professional as one who gets paid, not for working, but for playing; for the greenkeeper and the professional to regard the manager as a glorified flunkey; and for the pro and the manager to regard the course superintendent as one is no gentleman, hired merely to handle smelly fertilizers.

The positions are interdependent to a slight extent on most golf courses, and it is in the case of this overlapping that friction between the department heads occurs most of the time. A typical example is that both the pro's shop and the clubhouse depend upon the course mechanic and his equipment to effect minor repairs in wiring, plumbing, machinery, woodwork, and the like. The greenkeeper, busy man, is loath to lend his most useful assistant to a department over which he has no control. A breakdown may occur on the course while the mechanic is repairing the pro's buffing machine or the refrigerator in the kitchen. The chances of this are slight, of course. What the greenkeeper really does not like is to see somebody else giving orders to his pet employe.

Or it may be that the professional wants the greens watered during some part of the day when the players will be least discommoded. To the greenkeeper this savors of someone telling him how to run his business, someone who probably doesn't know the difference between *capriola dactylon* and *agrostis maritima*. With a little arranging the pro's wishes might be granted, but such a concession on the part of the turf guardian might indicate that

he didn't know as much as the paid-to-player. Again friction.

And some day the pro wants to entertain some of the boys in return for similar favors paid to him. He happens to choose a day to use the clubhouse when the manager is doing his best to satisfy the demands of the finicky Mrs. Blotz who is trying to wriggle into a higher social standing with a tea at the club. Plenty of raw material here for a conflagration.

### Would Meetings Further Harmony?

What is necessary for perfect co-operation is a better understanding by all three of the real problems of the course as a whole. As a reformer the writer might follow the custom of his fellows and suggest that on each course the three department heads get together from time to time to iron out their various difficulties. However he does not do this because he is sure that the procedure only would serve to cement in each man's mind the conviction that his cause was the most righteous, no arbitrators being present to weigh the individual merits of the cases.

An admirable custom of the Hacienda Country club of La Habra, Calif., is to have the greenkeeper, professional, and manager attend the monthly board meetings and there give vent to their respective opinions as to how the club may be more efficiently run. In this way the technical knowledge of each department head is brought to the notice of club officials and personal biases and prejudices may be discounted. It is conceivable that this system might serve to check the club servant who carries on whispering campaigns by pouring into the ears of listening club members stories concerning the perfidies of his fellow department heads. This lovely type of fellow, all too frequent around golf courses, invariably is embarrassed by a showdown.

Another method of promoting understanding which has been pretty well neglected is for the department heads of the courses in a certain district to have occasional gatherings. Greenkeepers and professionals throughout the country have found it to their advantage to meet periodically at some course to discuss and exchange ideas. The advantages of this system could be multiplied by carrying it two steps further; that is, by having the greenkeepers, pros, and managers in the various districts get together once or twice during the year to exchange differences of



North Hills C. C., Menomonee Falls, Wisc., is one of the leading clubs of the Milwaukee district. Here is a view of its attractive and well-designed clubhouse.

opinion. There is little doubt that considerable fun would fly on such occasions, but it is conceivable that out of the chaos would arise the unique idea that possibly one's fellow employee on a golf course plays an important part in the general scheme of things.

In addition, once during the year in each district there should be a golf tournament among the various department heads of the area. This is not suggested because of its recreational value alone, but to emphasize to greensmen and managers in particular that golf courses are neither grass nurseries nor hotels; they are places upon which to play golf.

Finally, to give the house men a break, there should be an annual banquet of department heads to prove to the pros and the course superintendents that there is more to a golf club than the pounding of a small ball around a verdant pasture.

These are but radical suggestions not to be heeded by old time department heads. It is impossible to conceive how they could get through a day without a spat with one another.

### New Haven Park Greens Are Enlarged to Handle Traffic

**I**N AN ARTICLE appearing in *Parks and Recreation* describing the greens of the municipal golf course of New Haven, Conn., W. L. Wirth, superintendent of parks, says: "We find that although our greens are the size of most private courses they are not large enough to take care of

the enormous crowds on this course. We have had as many as 800 play in one day. Therefore, this past year, according to the capacity of our nursery, we enlarged two greens, and intend to do the same every year until all are enlarged. This enables us to move the cup more often and farther apart, so that a trampled section may have a chance to recuperate."

### Theft Wave at Clubs Result of New Memberships

**M**ANY NEW faces in the memberships of golf clubs and smaller locker-room staffs have been responsible for an unprecedented number of thefts at golf clubs during the past season.

Sneak thieves masquerading as new members have made wholesale raids on lockers in the metropolitan districts and the careless member who left valuables in an unlocked locker frequently did so to his sorrow.

Evidences of an organized gang being at work were found in the Chicago and New York districts. Theft became so frequent that signs warning members to lock their lockers were posted in conspicuous places.

**K**EEP COURSE machinery well lubricated. Don't shove the drum of lubricating oil in any old corner of the equipment shed; find a well-located place for it, easy to get to. Keep gummy dust off the noses of the oiling cans. All this takes very little time, but repays a hundredfold.