

GOLF'S 1932 BILL

\$244,600,000 Spent on Game Despite Curtailment; Figures Detailed

LEST THERE be some moaning that the depression folded up the golf business, let's just see how the game fared on a financial basis during 1932.

GOLFDOM did not make its annual survey at the end of the 1932 for the very adequate reason that these surveys set us back more than \$3,000. There wasn't three grand for us to shoot in one shot of statistical work last year. But from the financial reports of about 900 private clubs, several hundred letters from professionals, numerous letters and talks with fee-course owners and many reports of municipal course operations, we have been able to make a fairly reliable guess at the score of 1932.

Play was off approximately 25% from 1931, making about 70 million rounds as the figure for 1932. At the metropolitan district municipal and fee-courses the loss was heaviest, going as high as 40% in some cases.

Women's play again increased last year. About a 20% rate of increase was registered, averaging all classes of courses, although the private club women's play showed the greatest increase.

You can figure all you please, but you won't be able to get higher than 2,225,000 golfers, even including the infrequent players, during boom years. Last year with the private clubs enforcing the forfeit of membership for delinquencies in payment more than ever before, the slump in private club membership was only about 15%, bringing the number of private club men and women players down to a little over the 900,000 mark. Women players at private and fee courses (including municipal) now are nearly 40% of all players.

GOLFDOM's records, which are the most accurate and complete in existence, show that only 47 of the 5,691 golf clubs passed out during 1932. This is a much lower loss than can be boasted by any other business that comes to mind. Practically all of these dead courses were in smaller towns or at resorts.

One point that is plain from the 1932 financial reports of golf clubs is that more 18-hole private clubs made money than ever before. They slashed operating expenses unmercifully, but still got by in



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pretty good condition. This year, if general business conditions improve, many of the deferred and necessary purchases will have to be made for course and clubhouse maintenance and operation, or the clubs will suffer so that ultimate recovery will be long away and expensive. The daily-fee courses were the plants that took it on the chin in 1932. Due to price wars not 10% of the 700 fee courses in the country did better than break even.

Summing up the expenses of golf in 1932:

Initiation and transfer fees....	\$ 2,100,000
Dues	60,000,000
Guest green-fees (private club)	6,000,000
Fee and municipal course fees.	19,000,000
Clubhouse income	85,000,000
Playing equipment purchases..	12,500,000
Caddie hire	20,000,000
Golf apparel	40,000,000

That makes a total of \$244,600,000 spent for golf directly, in a poverty-stricken year for the game. These figures are extremely conservative.

You may note, with interest, what a comparatively small part of the total is spent for the actual playing of the game. The rest of it is put into circulation as a protest against hoarding and as health and merriment insurance.

HAVING a waiting list these days is something that makes a club worth studying. The Binghamton (N. Y.) C. C. filled up its quota of 200 senior members and couldn't take in the extras that applied under this plan:

Between April, 1932 (when the plan was put into effect) and July 1, 1932 each member who secured a new member agreeing to pay dues of \$10 a month, including tax, for 12 consecutive months, had his own dues reduced from \$17.50 to \$10 a month, which reduced the dues of each old member who got a newcomer, approximately \$85 a year.

Treating the old member as a unit paying approximately \$105 a year, including tax, the club gained about \$35 on each of its old members who brought a new member into the fold.

Classifications for junior members up to \$55 (according to age) and unmarried women or women whose husbands did not play, at \$50 a year, also added to the club income.

In the past two years the Binghamton club has reduced its current and funded debt about \$25,000.



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