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New Ideas, Work and Enthusiasm Outsmart Depression at Clubs

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THAT GREAT magazine *Time*, several issues ago made one of its few fumbles when it said that 25% of the nation's golf clubs were bankrupt or had suspended. What *Time* based its figures on was the fact that the USGA membership had slumped 25% in a little over two years.

Nobody can make a reasonably good guess on how many golf clubs are sadly in the red financially. GOLFDOM, which gets more annual financial statements of golf clubs than any other factor in the field, already has commented on the 1932 statements showing there is ample foundation for the estimate that more clubs operated at a profit in 1932 than during any other year of American golf history. As for clubs suspending operations altogether, the prospect for 1933 indicates that very few folded entirely, and those were largely of the 9-hole pasture type. Some of the larger clubs that were in over their heads on plant investment may turn to daily-fee but that won't be a bad thing for the game. It should arouse more golf interest if properly worked.

New Ways to Sign Up Members

But this prospect of competition with luxurious private courses operating on a fee basis, already has done its bit in benefiting the golf field. It stirred up some ingenious thought and brisk action among clubs threatened with this competition as

a deterrent to their membership campaigns.

Last year one of the country's greatest golf clubs put new pep and brought new money into its affairs by running an entertainment schedule that was the greatest thing in its metropolitan community. The club made money on its entertainments, got a committee of live young workers to organize, conduct and publicize the schedule, and put new zip, along with new members into the entire situation.

Another club that had a hard membership problem created a class of associate members who were admitted on introduction by a member, at an annual dues charge of \$115. The member's dues stayed at \$200 a year, unless he introduced an acceptable associate member, in which case the member had his own dues cut to \$115.

Another club, clearly realizing that women's interest in golf is the liveliest part of the game, held winter luncheons for its women members and stirred them up on membership solicitation. The women did more than the men could do in getting desirable new members.

Pros, Managers Must Help

The pros and managers, fully aware that the foundation of their operations must be a large membership, took more of an interest in membership solicitation than they

ever did before. Wherever a man was really on the job in the pro and house departments, visiting men or women players were impressed by some thoughtful exhibition of superior club service. You'll see a decided development in that phase of department head activity during 1933.

I know of one case when one of the brightest young pros of my acquaintance moved into a new job this year. The job is at a club where 75 members had resigned since the end of last season. Before this boy took this job he visited every one of the resigned members and asked them why they quit. In only a few of the cases were the resignations made imperative by the resignee's financial condition. Most of the members had resigned because they thought things were "dead" at the club.

This kid showed them a program of events he had worked out for men, women and children. He told them about his instruction policies and what he had observed at other clubs in the way of ideas that could be put into effect at this club to pep things up. Single-handed, he got 58 of the members to come back into the fold.

That illustration shows that a lot of the clubs may be overlooking bets in not going after old members for renewal of their memberships. With many clubs cutting dues the last two years, and with club's operations on a lively but simple basis, there is a new appeal at many plants.

Reinstating Old Members

Alexander Warden, of the Meadow Lark C. C., Great Falls, Mont., reports that ably run organization, following a fine financial showing in 1932, now permits members who resigned during the last three years to be reinstated without penalty, providing they were fully paid up at the time of resignation. This club which was in the red \$2,500 at the end of 1931 watched its operations on a strict monthly budget basis during 1932 and ended out of debt and with a cash balance of \$1,100. Naturally its former members are going to be impressed with this example of successful operating and will be inclined to come back. Meadow Lark intends to put in a swimming pool and tennis court as a further attraction for members in 1933.

Waiving the initiation fee as an emergency measure has succeeded beyond expectation in many cases. One of the old and distinguished metropolitan district clubs, by eliminating the initiation fee,

took in approximately 100 of the finest type of younger members since the close of the 1932 season.

Many smaller town clubs, such as the excellent Hillsdale (Mich.) C. C., have eliminated the initiation fee. When you can belong to a course like that at Hillsdale for \$25, payable \$12.50 January 1 and July 1, you have a heaven-sent answer to the call for poor man's golf. Considerable play is made on community pride in the membership drives of such clubs as Hillsdale, and properly so, for a course like Hillsdale's establishes the community as a place far above the average.

Base Dues on Amount of Play

Dat old debbil dues which has been giving hell to golf clubs is being attacked in a most ingenious manner by the Fox Hills G. C., at Stapleton, N. Y. The Fox Hills plan has been the subject of much discussion in the New York metropolitan sector and chances are that other clubs will adopt it before the opening of the season.

Considerable investigation was done by the Fox Hills club. James J. Conaty, green-chairman of Fox Hills, and the one to whom his comrades assigned the development of this effort to reduce the cost of golf, tells of the idea, in advising GOLF-DOM:

"Prior to this year our annual dues have been \$200, plus U. S. government tax. During the past winter the number of our resignations was greater by far than expected and the Board of Directors felt that something must be done to permit members to play golf at a cost more in keeping with the times. The committee appointed formulated the following plan:

Dues to be fixed at \$100 a year, payable in ten monthly installments. The use of the golf course for playing and practice to be \$1.00 per day up to a total of 60 days in any one year with unlimited golf privileges after that and without further charge. An analysis of the playing activity for the season of 1932 showed an average of 40 days of golf per member. This distributes the cost of golf more equitably and those who make a greater use of the course contribute more than those who make little or no use of it.

We believe dues will take care of fixed overhead charges and the income derived from the playing fee plus the other additional revenue will be sufficient to take care of departmental operations provided



Clubhouse and No. 8 green at Pine Hills C. C., Sheboygan, Wis. The hole is 365 yards, with tee elevated about 35 ft. Native stone steps lead down to the fairway. A stream runs about 20 yards in front of the tee. The course is one of the hardest to score on in the state, according to "Doc" Treacy, veteran Woodmont pro. Paul Johnson is Pine Hills pro.

the chairmen of the various committees confine themselves to the budgetary limits placed upon them. To make this change possible it was necessary to amend the by-laws and to create a special class of member, inasmuch as we own our property and a resident member is required to hold a participating certificate of interest in the club assets. Dues have been reduced to the resident members and to the special members and the special membership class has been extended for a two-year period and given the same playing privileges as enjoyed by resident members, except that the special member does not have to purchase an interest in the club.

Of course, it is too early to measure results and we will have to await the beginning of the golfing season in April to prove whether we are on the right track. It is interesting, however, to note that during January and February we enrolled sixteen new members which is most unusual the first two months of any year around New York. The success of the plan depends upon our getting a full membership.

It has always been my opinion that the cost of golf was getting beyond control and that catering to the whims and wishes

of a few made golf a luxury rather than a pastime or a sport.

It may be interesting for you to know the average number of rounds per member for a twelve (12) month period:

13 members played	0 rounds.
30 members played	1-9 rounds.
23 members played	10-19 rounds.
15 members played	20-29 rounds.
14 members played	30-39 rounds.
25 members played	40-49 rounds.
45 members played	50-59 rounds.
13 members played	60-99 rounds.
12 members played	100 rounds and over.

Tom Boyd, our professional and greenkeeper, has shown excellent results and his co-operation and industry has made it possible for the green-committee to keep within a very limited budget made necessary by a general reduction of income and still provide a playable course."

BROWNED AREAS on putting greens are not necessarily due to brown-patch infection. They may be due to:

- Insufficient water.
- Poisons in the soil.
- Chemical burns.
- Unfavorable soil conditions.
- Starvation—especially no nitrogen.