

General Outdoor Advertising Co.

PLAY GOLF at COFFIN

SPRINKLED FAIRWAYS
WELL KEPT GREENS

tickets 25c 30c

WEST 30th IN RIVERSIDE PARK

SPONSORED BY INDIANAPOLIS PARK DEPT.

Billboards such as this one helped to increase patronage at Indianapolis muni courses and thus permit those in charge to show surprising profits from annual operation.

Efficiency and Advertising Keep Politics Out of Muni Golf

By CARL HORN

EVEN BEFORE municipalities became practically broke and politicians became honest because there was nothing left to steal, municipal golf course operation was a conspicuously honest and ably managed phase of public works. Why there are so many brilliant examples of this GOLFDOM never could figure out because the officials responsible for golf course operation are constantly harassed by political interference. In some cases this influence of politics is responsible for outrageous mismanagement, but these instances are fairly rare.

In the last couple of years with depression hitting hardest on the class that makes use of public course facilities, there has been an opportunity to appraise the standard of executive and operating management at municipal courses. These courses have stood up well and justified the claims they have made for government money as self-liquidating public works.

One of the outstanding jobs of selling municipal golf facilities to the public and of

handling the operating job in good shape has been that done at Indianapolis, Ind., where A. C. Sallee is general supt. of Parks and Recreation and Arthur Lockwood is golf supervisor.

Public Golf Advertises

Among the smart things that the Indianapolis Parks department did was to make use of attractive advertising in bringing its facilities to the attention of the public. Through the generosity of the General Outdoor Advertising Co. which donated vacant boards during July and August the city was able to advertise its new Coffin course and municipal swimming pools. The total cost to the city was about \$300 for printing the posters.

Since the reorganization of the city's golf department in 1930 the four 18-hole and two 9-hole courses have made a profit.

Highlights of the operation and policies at Indianapolis are extracted from the 1930, 1931 and 1932 annual reports of

Supt. Sallee to Mayor Sullivan and the Board of Park Commissioners.

From this report:

When the present Board of Park Commissioners and Superintendent came into power early in 1930, a deficit of \$25,684.54 existed in the golf division, covering the six Municipal courses.

A thorough investigation revealed that three of the courses were being grossly mismanaged, receipts (golf fees) misappropriated and the personnel in charge of all courses generally inefficient.

Expert Non-Political Advisors

At this time it was deemed advisable to change the plan of individual course management and a radical departure in operating methods was adopted. Special attention was given to employing only the most efficient help. A Golf Advisory board was appointed, consisting of local golf experts—William H. Diddel, golf architect, Ralph Young and Edwin Lennox of Highland, and Samuel Mueller of Broadmoor country clubs—each man a specialist in his line, and the best the state affords. The valuable advice and cooperation of these men was given entirely without cost to the park department—a real public service.

There was a reasonable increase in play, even in face of the most destructive drouth the city had ever known, making it difficult to maintain the courses in proper condition. The daily fee was increased from 25c to 50c (season tickets from \$12.50 to \$15.00) on South Grove course only, otherwise conditions were about the same as in 1929.

The advantages resulting from this radical change in operating methods, standardization of equipment, improved buying facilities, weeding out of inefficient help, etc. turned our \$25,684.54 deficit into a profit of \$25,808.27 at the end of 1930—a difference of over \$50,000 in one year.

Another feature, no doubt entering largely into the restoration of golf fees to the city, was the elimination of free golf passes. Before 1930, hundreds of free passes were given out to specially favored individuals with political influence or "pull." Not a single free golf pass was given out in 1930—not even to newspaper reporters. This action was resented by only a few and was commended generally by the golf-playing public because it was the only equitable way to handle the situation. In 1931 and 1932, however, the State Board of Accounts ruled that we might allot a few passes to each of the local news-

papers in exchange for publicity for building up play on our courses. No other passes have been issued since 1929.

In furtherance of our plan for placing the golf department on a self-sustaining basis in 1931, the position of "Course Manager" on each of the six municipal courses was abolished and a general manager or "Supervisor of Golf" appointed at an annual salary of \$4,000 to have active management of all courses. This action resulted in an annual saving of \$5,300 in salaries alone.

Arthur G. Lockwood, widely known professional, in charge of the famous French Lick Springs links for 12 years, and who has constructed a number of courses in various parts of the country, was employed by the park department as Golf Supervisor early in 1931, and is successfully managing the department at this time.

Spend Wisely; Earn More

A net profit of \$18,136.74 was made on five of our six courses in 1931, Coffin Course being closed for reconstruction. For the first time in its history the Sarah Shank Course (nine holes) was self-sustaining and showed a profit of \$1,771.86. Operating expenses in the golf department in 1931 were \$58,768.61 as compared with \$92,679.49 in 1929, a gradual reduction of \$33,910.88 in two years. During these two years considerable new equipment was purchased and many physical improvements on the courses were accomplished.

On account of the sale of 30 acres of ground in the heart of the Charles E. Coffin Golf Course, for the establishment of a Government Hospital for Disabled War Veterans, recommended by the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, Mayor Sullivan and others, it was necessary to reconstruct this course in 1931. This was done under the direction of William H. Diddel. The construction costs were taken care of through the sale of the above mentioned 30 acres at an appraised price of \$16,355 and the appropriation by the City Council of \$12,500 from an unused balance in the park fund, and by using \$12,992.71 from the general park maintenance fund, thereby avoiding the necessity of a special bond issue.

Exhibition Profit to Charity

The partial completion and opening of the Coffin Course late in 1932 was one of the "high spots" in sporting events in Indiana during the year. The selection of Gene Sarazen, Open champion of the

United States and Great Britain for 1932, and Tommy Armour and ex-holder of several major titles, to oppose Neal McIntyre, Indiana state champion and Ralph Stonehouse, the Coffin Course professional, proved a great drawing card to thousands of spectators. The committee in charge turned over approximately \$1,000 of the proceeds realized to the city employes emergency fund, used to feed the city's destitute and unemployed.

The new water lines and pumping station installed at the Coffin Course provide a supply sufficiently large to insure watered fairways and the finest greens. This is a new venture for municipal golf in Indianapolis, and it is to be hoped that similar sprinkling systems can be provided for other city courses.

Excluding the Coffin Course, which was opened late in the season and not then quite completed, the golf department, showed a net profit of \$10,629.47 for 1932. This amount was made on three courses. South Grove showed a deficit of \$2,130.20 in 1932 and Douglas \$862.69. The Douglas course indicated a slight gain in receipts over former years, the deficit being reduced about 50 per cent as compared with 1931, so this course really shows a healthy gain, as the deficit in 1929 amounted to \$6,365.83.

The maintenance costs on these two courses, as well as Riverside, Pleasant Run and Sarah Shank, included the addition of considerable new equipment, and many permanent improvements such as laying new water mains on South Grove and Riverside, needed for many years; repairs to buildings, new greens, sprinkling systems, tool houses, etc.

The golf department continues to function successfully under the new plan of reorganization effected in 1930. A substantial profit has been made each year, as the department showed a deficit of \$25,684.54 up to 1929, and the links never paid their own way prior to 1930.

Golf Pays for Other Play

While it is not the desire of the Board of Park Commissioners to conduct the city golf courses, or other forms of recreation as a commercial or profit-making enterprise, the demand for relief from the already too-heavy tax burden makes it imperative that the park department absorb a large proportionate share of an enforced reduction in the city's tax requirements, and this revenue is absolutely needed if the golf courses are to be kept in opera-

tion. It also aids very materially in maintaining our swimming pools, playgrounds and other recreational facilities.

At present all city courses are considered in excellent physical condition and a number of improvements are under way. The department as a whole will show a substantial profit for 1933.

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Lockwood's detailed annual reports to Supt. Sallee for the records afford specific evidence of progress and expert management and are so airtight against criticism that they serve as additional protection of competent operation against any threat of politics, a danger to which municipal golf operating profits never shall be immune as long as administrations are subject to change and a new set of higher-ups come in itchy for the money and jobs involved in municipal golf enterprises.

SYNDICATE BACKS PRO

Bill Schwartz Winter Tour
Financed by Local
Shareholders

ONE OF THE kids we'd like to see pick up some important prize money on the winter circuit is Bill Schwartz of St. Louis, because it might encourage golfers in other districts to chip in and send their promising aspirants for sharpshooting honors on future tours.

Bill is the youth who received national publicity as the pro whose winter tournament expenses were financed by a \$1,000 fund raised from the "Bill Schwartz Golf Tour," an idea devised by Sid Salomon, Jr., who rates as a good golfer, an enthusiast and a grand fellow in St. Louis and points north, east, south and west. Allied with Sid as sponsors of this Schwartz tour fund are Gus Moellman, Chick Irwin, Dick Bockencamp, Roswell Messing, Leo Bauman, Emil Boardman and Elliot Whitbread. The committee issues stock certificates which are hopefully held by a number of St. Louisans.

In announcing details of the fund the committee chairman's bulletin said:

There's a sporting plan afoot that will appeal to every true golfer and business man, and I'd like to make it as brief as possible, and still get the story over to you.

Bill Schwartz is one of the best golfers in the Middle West, and, given the proper opportunity, will rank among the best in