

Outdoor Features Attract Crowds To Olympia Parties

By JACK FULTON, JR.

WHEN THE frying-hot days of July and August roll around, it is pleasant to attend a country club party away from hot city pavements and stuffy living quarters. This is especially so when the club has an outdoor dance platform, so that full benefit can be taken of the cool evening breezes.

Olympia Fields CC, in the Chicago district, has an unusually elaborate entertainment program each year, scheduling dinner dances twice weekly, on Thursdays and Saturdays. Other than the dance facilities on the club's outdoor floor, no added entertainment features are ordinarily planned for the Saturday dances, since the week-end crowd is always sufficient to make the party successful.

But attracting a crowd on Thursday requires a certain amount of ballyhoo, Olympia has found, so its entertainment committee concocts various stunts and features to boost attendance. One policy is to serve the dinner at tables on the clubhouse lawn whenever the weather permits; eating outdoors is much more pleasurable on a warm summer evening than under a hot dining-room ceiling.

Another policy is to offer a number of attractions in addition to the dancing and much ingenuity is shown and a great deal of work is done in preparation for each Thursday's party by Olympia Fields' entertainment committee, with the able assistance of the club manager, Carl L. Schweitzer.

Below, because other clubs may be interested in staging similar evenings, will be found descriptions of three of Olympia's most successful outdoor affairs of last summer. These particular parties have become fixtures on Olympia's entertainment schedule. But first a few words about the dinner on the lawn:

Tables and chairs are set out near to the dining room to facilitate service and the menu planned so that its items will not be spoiled through becoming too cool (in the case of hot dishes) or too warm

(in the case of cold servings) should unexpected delays hinder prompt service.

Nearly all of the members and their guests arrive for their meal before dark has settled definitely. For late-comers, sufficient illumination is furnished through three medium sized flood-lights on the roof of the nearby clubhouse and festoons of lanterns swung between standards erected temporarily to support the wires. After dark, the area is as well illuminated under this system as the average night club, so the late arriving members raise few objections to the effect that they "can't see what they're eating."

Olympia's outdoor parties are particularly popular with the members for entertaining their friends and frequently there are more guests present than members. On one occasion, 1,200 persons turned up and were served—for Olympia's annual "Circus."

Members Assist with "Circus"

The Circus party is most elaborate. Tables are arranged around a typical circus ring some 40 feet in diameter wherein the activities of the evening are centered.

Performers at the circus are 75 to 100 of the members of the club, who volunteer their services. Alleys in the locker-rooms, both men's and women's, are invited to work up "acts" and the club stands the expense of whatever costumes are needed. These are rented from a downtown costume house at a figure surprisingly low considering the variety of the demands the volunteer performers make. Clowns, bareback riders, side-show barkers, comic policemen, ballet dancers, oriental girls, acrobats, flower girls, soft drink vendors and other characters generally to be seen at a circus are generally represented at Olympia's circus party.

The evening's festivities begin about dusk with the "grand parade." The performers are served a free buffet dinner an hour before and put on their costumes and assemble behind the clubhouse. The

parade is formed, with the club orchestra in the lead, followed by the bareback riders (on horses from the club stables), the clowns, the ringmaster, and all the rest. The parade wends its way around the clubhouse and straight through the circus ring, accompanied by much noise, much festivity and much applause from the assembled diners. It disbands in a convenient hollow behind the tables, where the various "acts" wait their turn to enter the ring and put on their stunts, each of which is introduced in true circus style by the ringmaster, who in Olympia's case, is the chairman of the entertainment committee.

The acts are finished by 10:30 p. m. The orchestra moves to the club's outdoor dance platform. The performers change into their regular clothes. Dancing continues until 1:00 a. m.

"County Fair" Draws Crowd

Another popular party held each season by Olympia is the "County Fair." For this evening, Manager Schweitzer locates some carnival troup touring the neighborhood and arranges for it to set up its various tents and booths on the lawn adjacent to the dining area. The concessions are arranged in a semi-circle behind the piece d'occasion—a full size merry-go-round, callope and all.

Members and their guests participate in the attractions of the carnival to whatever extent they desire. Every thing is a dime, from rides on the merry-go-round to chances at the paddle-wheels on stuffed woolly dogs, bric-a-brac and canes. By the end of the evening, there is scarcely a woman present whose arms are not filled with an assortment of thoroughly worthless prizes for which their escorts have paid plenty in dimes.

Business arrangements for the County Fair are simple. The carnival troup erects the merry-go-round and the concession tents with its own labor. It furnishes all necessary equipment and all merchandise to be awarded the holders of the lucky numbers.

The club handles all money, each concession tent having a member of the club on hand to watch and assist the operator of the paddle-wheel or game contained therein. At the end of the evening, the member makes an inventory of whatever merchandise has not been given out and turns in this list, together with what cash the booth has collected.

The club then settles with the owner of



How the hurdles are arranged for the "horse" races. In the upper foreground is part of the net from which the dice are spilled

the carnival, paying him an agreed price (supposedly cost) for the merchandise disposed of, and splitting the evening's proceeds on a 50-50 basis.

"Horse Race" Complicated, but Fun

A third feature party on Olympia's outdoor program is "Horse-Race Night." Some fifteen hurdles about 1 ft. high and 10 ft. wide are arranged in a line to represent the race-track. At the finish line is a circular net supported by uprights to form a sort of shallow bowl some 8 ft. from the ground. A rope fastened to the center of the net and leading over a pulley above it permits an operator to turn the "bowl" inside out and eject the contents onto the ground below.

The bowl is used to hold three mammoth dice about 1 cu. ft. in size which are easily made from wooden boxes, painted white with black pips. The dice, used to control the progress of the "horses" (to be described shortly) are tossed into the net and ejected therefrom by means of the rope described above. They fall to the ground and the face uppermost on each die determines which horse in the race moves forward one hurdle.

The "horses," of which six are required for each race, are dummy papier-mache beasts available at any costumers, into which a person may step and adjust around his waist. At Olympia, daughters of members serve as the "jockeys" and are appropriately costumed for the affair.

The race is very simple to run. The six horses line up just short of the first hurdle at the far end of the track. The dice are allowed to fall from the net. An announcer calls the results: "Four, six, two," whereupon horses 4, 6 and 2 move up

one hurdle. The dice are thrown again, this time reading "Five, three, three." Horse 5 moves up one hurdle; horse 3 advances two hurdles. This routine is continued until one horse wins and another "places" second. Toward the end of each race, the excitement of the assembled diners reaches fever pitch.

This excitement on the part of the spectators is due to the fact that they are betting in nominal fashion on each race. Olympia has regular pari-mutuel tickets printed for this purpose and sells them before each race to the spectators at 10c per ticket. The buyer can invest in as many tickets as he chooses on whatever horse his fancy dictates, and can bet the horse will win or place.

About a dozen wives and daughters of members handle the detail of selling the tickets, circulating among the tables with tickets on each horse. When a race is ready to begin they turn in whatever money they have collected at a cashier's window, located in a tent near the finish line, where the club auditor and several assistants, while the race is being run, count the total amount of money bet on the race, and tabulate the number of tickets purchased on each horse.

As soon as the winning and second-place horse has been determined, on the track, this information is relayed to the tent, where the odds to pay back to lucky ticket holders is quickly computed. For this purpose, Olympia holds back 20 per cent of each purse (to cover expense of the party) and returns the balance as winnings to the spectators. An example will make clear the workings of the payoff window:

Suppose the "win" sales for a race were as follows:

56 tickets on Horse 1.....	\$ 5.60
47 tickets on Horse 2.....	4.70
76 tickets on Horse 3.....	7.60
81 tickets on Horse 4.....	3.10
88 tickets on Horse 5.....	8.80
40 tickets on Horse 6.....	4.00

Total purse	\$33.80
Club's "take" (20%).....	6.75

Leaving for "payoff".....\$27.05

If Horse 1 wins, 1/56th of \$27.05, figured to the nearest nickel, goes to each holder of a "win" ticket on Horse 1. In this case it would amount to 50c. If horse 2 wins, 1/47th of \$27.05 is paid back, and so on.



Daughters of members serve as jockeys of the papier-mache horses, obtainable at any costumer. The jockey uniforms can be rented from the same source

Computing "place" tickets is somewhat more complicated in that holders of such tickets on both the winning horse and the horse placing second are entitled to visit the pay-off window. Here is how these bets are computed:

Suppose the "place" sales on a race are as follows:

28 tickets on Horse 1.....	\$ 2.80
42 tickets on Horse 2.....	4.20
19 tickets on Horse 3.....	1.90
39 tickets on Horse 4.....	3.90
37 tickets on Horse 5.....	3.70
24 tickets on Horse 6.....	2.40

Total purse	\$18.90
Club's "take" (20%).....	3.70

Leaving for "payoff".....\$15.20

"Place" tickets on both the winning horse and the second horse must be paid, half of the pot to each—\$7.60 in this case. Suppose horse 3 wins and horse 4 places. The \$15.20 goes to holders of "place" tickets on 3 and 4. But notice that twice as many tickets were bought on 4 to place than were bought on 3 to place. Horse 4 pays 1/39th of \$7.60 or roughly 20c per ticket, while Horse 3 pays 1/19th of \$7.60, or 40c. Any other combination of horses would be figured the same way.

About half an hour is required to run each race, including the time needed to sell tickets, operate the race proper and pay the holders of winning tickets. Olympia finds four races in the course of the early evening to be about enough, after which the club orchestra takes charge of things and lures the crowd to the dance floor.