

IN THE ROUGH

with **HERB GRAFFIS**

DIGGING through pile after pile of newspaper clippings on plans for municipal golf course construction or rehabilitation with government and local relief funds, two points make GOLFDOM stop and wonder.

First is that obviously much of these funds will be wasted because the original plan of fund allotment, calling for approval of course design plans by a national board of recognized architectural experts, is not being followed. Some of the relief courses we have seen miss obvious chances to supply their communities with absolutely great public courses. It's too bad, because those responsible for the planning still would have received their dough and relief labor still would have been used, but the communities would have received much better courses. Local people also would have benefitted in extending their golf architectural knowledge by having consulted with experts.

THE other point is that some of these relief public courses are going to make things plenty tough for privately-owned fee courses in their neighborhoods. The labor could have been employed and private capital given a chance while the public interest was being served, had some body been active at Washington protecting the fee course owner. But the prospect of a national fee course association looks just as far away as ever before. Only about 10% of the course owners have shown any interest in a national association, and it takes money to start and operate such an organization.

SARAZEN'S genius for publicity was demonstrated recently. Gene came out with one popular punch to the button when he said he wouldn't play in the Agua Caliente Open because of the pari-mutuel feature. It will do tournament pros, tournaments and golf no good for the pros to let themselves get in the same class with race horses, dogs that chase the mechanical rabbit, crap dice and pugs.

At the same time publicity was smoking on the Agua Caliente pari-mutuels, the

sport pages carried stories on an investigation of crooked horse race gambling in Texas and the doping of Young Joe Firpo on the afternoon before his fight with Frankie Saglio in Chicago. The Texas scandal threatens to end horse racing in the state.

Star golfers have not been in the habit of betting on themselves or anyone else in championships. They've kept their activities above reproach. The laddies never forget that a professional gambler is a smart guy who figures the percentage for himself first, or no go.

WITH this pari-mutuel thing going on you're liable someday to hear nasty whispers start because some player missed an 18-inch putt. Then maybe golf's first big scandal will develop, simply because a putt didn't sink. The unfortunate pro's career will be ruined.

Agua Caliente has put up a lot of dough for pro golf and on that account gratitude is due the spot from pros, but the boys don't owe it enough to run the risks they take when they are the fall guys on this or any other gambling stunt. It's a case where the PGA had to take some action to establish itself in public esteem as a force for the purity of the game.

As things stood up to the last day of the event the public considered that the PGA was a silent partner in the promotion of tournament gambling, with professional gamblers on the operating end. On the last day of the Agua Caliente tourney, Jacobus, PGA president, made a statement to the press condemning this gambling business and asking that pros avoid such events in the future.

The tournament pari-mutuels were good publicity for Agua Caliente maybe, but certainly lousy publicity for pro golf.

MAYBE there's something in this tale for pros, or for credit men of the manufacturing companies—but anyway, a salesman for one of the golf equipment makers added several hundred dollars to his income last year by paying some of his pro customers' accounts in time to take the discount. The pros said it was O. K.

with them. The salesman paid for the fellows he knew were good but slow.

The fellow had to cut it out. He made the mistake of telling how much dough he was making by picking up this time discount money his customers were overlooking. Then some of the slow-pay pros thought he should have split with them. The salesman kidded the boys for blindly overlooking this extra dough and his sales manager made him discontinue the practice for fear some serious trouble might grow out of it.

NOW, gents, just between ourselves—and don't say anything about it to Ma and the gals—did you or did you not laugh to yourselves when Maureen Orcutt squawked to mischievous Henry McLemore of the United Press that the USGA was putting the gate at the women's championship over player welfare by switching the women's national championship matches from morning to afternoon play?

Henry writes some of the greatest and liveliest stuff on the sport pages. He has a genius for getting folks to talk out of turn. While we always will be committed to the idea that Maureen is a great gal, it looks to us this time like she ran Henry's batting average up in getting interviewees to skid on their own syllables.

Maureen is quoted: "What's the sense in forcing us (the women's national players) to start out after two in the afternoon? Of course, there is but one answer—the officials are looking for a bigger gate, and what the players want doesn't matter."

NOW Maureen, honey, listen to Daddy, who is an old guy with a lot of experience with female expenses. Do you think that the costs of the Curtis cup women's team trips to England are paid by the USGA simply saying to the steamboat companies, the hotel guys, et al, "Charge it and forget it, pals?" You've been on those teams and you know there are expenses that can't be ducked.

Besides quite a few of the girls don't want to get up early and rush out to the course until after they get the dishes done. They prefer afternoon play. Increased interest in women's golf calls for giving those who want to be in the gallery a better break with afternoon play. That is something that the girls probably don't want to deny to those interested in their advance and performances. After all, if the USGA needs help in defraying ex-

penses of women's national and international events, it ain't no sin to need dough these days.

ONE of the really tragic things about the competition for pros jobs is how some of the desperate boys even offer to kick back to the clubs that hire them some of the "huge" profits of pro shop operation, which once in a while run in excess of \$600 a season, if there is no salary for the pro figured into the bookkeeping.

Clubs that think they are wise and give these unfortunate and unknowing kick-back boys the job begin to get a trimming when the pro wakes up and finds that it is costing him money net on the job and that his living problem is even tougher than it was before he had a job; jobless, he wasn't going into debt to support golf players with an attempt to operate a shop satisfactorily. The club gets its trimming because pro department service is highly unsatisfactory; the pro ends the season behind the eight ball and there's one more party to be heard from in the chorus of misery. That party is the manufacturer who also is holding the bag.

Credit manager of a prominent golf company comments: "The pro who kicks back to the club any part of shop income on a private club job is either dumb or so desperate for work he deliberately sets himself on a 99 to 1 chance he will be unable to pay for goods bought. The fellow hasn't got a chance. Possibly more culpable and even dumber than the pro is the club official who is supposed to be a business man but who engages a pro under such an arrangement."

BASEBALL this winter is furnishing an interesting development in the business end of sports. Major league baseball clubs have been in the habit of playing Santa Claus to the baseball writers. One club that has lost \$600,000 in the last three years sent the local baseball reporters a Merry Christmas letter, and that's all. The club has started to use display advertising in the newspapers during the winter suggesting that the public come out and see its players perform next summer.

The baseball writers in this case are making no complaint at the disappearance of Santa Claus. In fact, his failure to visit the boys was learned by GOLFDOM in an entirely accidental manner. The old days of the "icemen" visiting the newspaper sports writer have almost gone and never

must be cleared through the sectional association which has a representative on the Women's Committee of the USGA.

The USGA yardage for determining women's par is as follows:

- Up to 200 yards.....par 3
- 201 to 375 yards.....par 4
- 376 to 550 yards.....par 5
- 551 yards and over.....par 6

METROPOLITAN GA, if it can get the British Ryder Cup team to compete, will postpone its annual open championship until September.

WALTER McCALLUM, well known golf expert of the Washington (DC) *Star*, figures that public golf around Washington this year is due to bring to the front some topnotch players as possible successors to the glory of George Voigt, when that fee course star was knocking them over between 1924 and 1927.

If pros at muni or fee courses could develop some star players the advertising would help a lot to get these courses to engage more pros under arrangements that would give the pros a chance to make a good living.

One place where the PGA might plant some agitation for having pros at all muni courses is among the players at the USGA Public Links national championship.

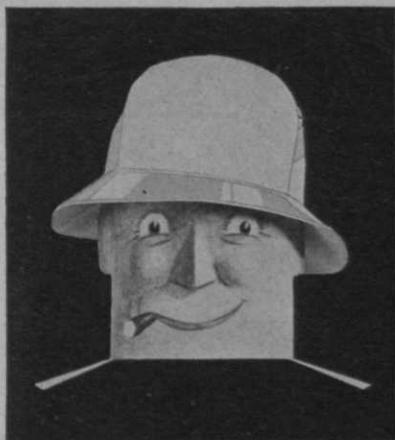
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