

SKEET ARMY GROWS

Trap Sports Hit New High In Club Member Acceptance

BY COL. JOE LINAHAN

THERE is growing evidence that trapshooting and especially skeet are worth while around a club from other angles than the principle one of offering something to keep up member interest through the non-golf season. Clubs are reporting growing interest and growing patronage and at the customary charge of \$1.25 for a round of 25 shells and targets few layouts are losing money. In fact many of them are cutting the price to \$1.15 or even \$1.00 and still manage to get out with an even break on the season, although these lowered charges are not generally made for the first year or so, until enough shooting has been done at the traps to bring back to the club treasury whatever investment was needed to make the original installation.

The added benefits shooting brings to clubs, other than holding member interest, are lead in importance by the ability of trap-equipped clubs to remain open or partially open during the winter, keep a skeleton crew of employees on the job and heat the clubhouse on the profits arising from patronage of the various department of the clubhouse. This is particularly important at clubs located in states with high liquor license fees. If the club closes down for six months in the year, it buys a 12-month license in order to serve liquor but six of them.

Another department of the club to benefit from trapshooting is the golf shop, not because very much golf equipment is going to be sold while snow is on the ground, but because running the traps is a fine solution of the average pro's problem of where he is going to find a job in winter. With trapshooting details to be watched every week-end, a pro can be kept sufficiently busy to warrant his staying on the job. And if he is on his toes, he should not find it bad business to put up a practice net somewhere in the clubhouse and solicit lesson business both from the shooters and from member-spectators who will always be on hand to watch the sport.

From Matt Melville, greenkeeper at Fox Hill CC, W. Pittston, Penn., comes

this recent word: "I was sorry to have to miss the Toronto greens show, but trapshooting and skeet have been going so well here this winter that I had to stick on the job. In fact it has been paying my salary all winter."

Frank Macdonald, manager of Beverly Shores (Ind.) GC, writes interestingly of his clubs experience with trapshooting. He reports:

"Inasmuch as you have been carrying a number of articles on skeet and trapshooting in GOLFDOM, thought you would be interested in hearing of our experience. It was your articles that interested me, as I had never shot at a clay pigeon before.

"Last fall we bought a cheap hand-operated trap, and built a traphouse out of old bridge plank and laid out a field between the front and back tees on the first hole. This was done to be close to the pro shop for shelter, as our clubhouse is not heated. We had our first shoot the Sunday after Thanksgiving with nine members turning out. This has steadily increased, until recently we had a fine day and fifty spectators turned out to watch thirty shooters.

"We have cleared enough money on these shoots to buy a new Western Automatic trap and build a new traphouse. This we are going to do this spring, in a new location close to the clubhouse. We intend to shoot all summer and install gas heat in the clubhouse next fall so that we can keep the bar and grill room open for the shooters next winter. This will undoubtedly give us an additional income and help us to pay a license fee based on a full year that we have been only able to use six months of the year.

"Unfortunately we don't seem to have the space for a skeet field but in view of our experience, I believe that any club can increase clubhouse business, maintain interest and keep the name of the club in the newspapers all winter and in addition show a nice profit from the installation of either skeet or trapshooting. We have signed four new members this winter on account of the traps."