

Golfdom

The Business Journal of Golf

J U N E , 1 9 3 7

Vol. 11

No. 6

NO LIES NECESSARY

How small-town club weathered good times and bad and today is everything its members aimed for

By KARL SUTPHIN

GIVE us a course so fine that we won't have to lie about it." That was the prayer offered by members of the Carlisle (Pa.) Country club in the years prior to 1934, when every dollar of income had a triple duty to perform. And, thanks to energetic work, a lot of foresight, and curtailment all along the line that really meant cutting things to the bone, the Carlisle Country club boasts today an 18-hole layout to be really proud of, a solvent financial condition, and a membership of 250 which would rather talk about how fine a club they belong to than anything else.

W. R. Shearer, a member of the Board of Governors since the club's founding in 1926, chairman of the green-committee from 1927 to 1935, and a committee of one that built the clubhouse out of two large barns, was the driving force behind the progress so visibly evident at Carlisle since the dark days prior to 1934. Says Shearer: "There had to be a lot of work done by a willing horse or jackass, and I guess the people thought I was it." Shearer continues with some facts of the earlier years of the club:

"The first nine holes at Carlisle were laid out in 1926, the course water system

installed, the land cleared and six holes developed during the year. The following year three creek holes were developed and in play by late summer, but in rainy weather faulty drainage on these holes provided a constant worry to those wishing to play the 'full nine.' At the end of three years, however, by the use of thousands of feet of tile ranging from 3 in. to 2 ft. in diameter, the holes which some feared would have to be abandoned became to many the most beautiful and interesting on the course. In 1927, 2,000 trees (white pine, white ash and American arbor vitae) were planted in a tree garden along the course and more than 500 of them thrived and from year to year have been transplanted to various parts of the course.

"In 1930, after using a pro and green-keeper since the club was organized, the two jobs were combined when we hired a young pro, John Gove. Gove is still

with us and the club owes him a huge debt of gratitude for the fine way he has handled his jobs, and held the club together, so to speak, when the going became pretty rough. Gove supervises the course in the morning, planning the work for the day, and devotes the afternoons to his shop and teaching. His wife is an excellent amateur player, is



Much of Carlisle CC's success is attributed to John Gove, club progresskeeper since 1930.

a member of the club and a big inspiration to the women players. She won the Central Pennsylvania Women's championship one year, giving our club a 'place in the sun.' At my suggestion, Gove took the short course for greenkeepers at Penn State two consecutive winters. Our excellent greens attest the value of this expenditure for greenkeeping knowledge."

And now for a few of the reasons why, or more correctly, how the Carlisle Country Club grew from a 9-hole course in 1934 to an 18-hole course in 1935.

1. They couldn't borrow any more money. That was a distinct advantage. It spelled economy.

2. They had a capable young progresskeeper who was anxious for an 18-hole course and who gave fine co-operation.

3. They had a president who wanted an 18-hole course and who was able to enthuse 60 golfers to subscribe \$50 apiece toward the development.

Second Nine Built for \$3,500

Part of the board signed a note for \$500 more. That made \$3,500 available for building seven new greens (two holes were partly developed), eight new tees, facing an original green in the opposite direction, seeding five fairways and adjoining roughs, extending the water system to the new greens and tees, removing fifty or more large oak and hickories, draining a swamp, buying stolons for seven greens, buying sand and mushroom soil, trapping five of the greens, etc.,

etc. Shearer was in charge of this job, and somehow completed the development within that \$3,500 figure.

Lacking a club angel to finance the club privately, the proposition to those members who underwrote \$50 each was that each person who brought in a new member would have his \$50 refunded when the new member paid his dues. In other words, the proposition was that the new nine would not cost the club or members anything. It didn't make sense. It sounded like Democratic financing—but it worked. Naturally, the boys were anxious for that new nine, and incidentally, to get their money back, so they got those 60 new members very quickly, signing most of them up as of July 1, 1934, so that by July 1, 1935, the club was getting dues from its entire membership instead of being out the dues of 60 members during the whole year of 1935.

Architect Gives Advice

The club called in an able, nationally known golf architect, who spent an afternoon at the club and for a small fee showed them how to connect the old and new nines to best advantage. An old woodsman showed them how to take down large trees without leaving any



Gove enjoys a lively sale of golf equipment in his recently built pro-shop, located just across the road from the clubhouse.

stumps, and to use Shearer's words, "we were not 'bunkered' by the high prices of outside development, and every 'explosion shot' of earth fell in the place it belonged."

The club has had the same stewardess for six years. She has a home at the club, gets a small salary and is furnished equipment, light, heat and refrigeration free; she retains all profits from the dining room. She buys all foods and hires her own help from her own funds. The club has no losses there.

Since repeal, Carlisle has developed its own tap room and all profits from that



Although not as beautiful as some club structures, Carlisle's members are proud of their clubhouse, built from two large barns, which measure 50 x 110 ft. Building has three large porches, with locker-room and 'Pine Room' located in basement.

source go into the club treasury. A scale of low prices for liquors and mixed drinks is the secret of how they got away from the custom of members bringing their own bottles. The ballroom is rented out on occasions to preferred organizations and a nice income is realized from rentals. A hard-working women's committee keeps the interior of the clubhouse in fine condition from the revenue they obtain from dances throughout the year.

Restore Dropped Initiation Fee

The initiation fee for the first six years was \$100. In 1932 it was dropped and the dues reduced by "zoning" the membership into three groups according to how far the members resided from the club; i.e., residential, 10 to 20 miles, non-resident. This held the old members and interested new ones. Today the initiation fee is \$25.

In 1936, the tennis courts were resurfaced, paths leading to the 6th, 7th and 9th tees were improved, there was much resodding on the old nine, and a large bridge was refloored. Improvements planned for the near future are a new practice putting green with nine cups, and a caddie house. An innovation which proved very popular last year at Carlisle was to give each hole an appropriate name, such as Hell's Half Acre, Great Expectations, The Gully, Golfer's Delight, The Conodoguinet, etc. These names are carried on the scorecard. Par for the 6,020-yd. course which lies in the center of the fertile Cumberland valley, surrounded by the Blue Ridge mountains, is 72.

Albany Newspapers Promote Three-Day Carnival of Golf

AN INNOVATION in golf promotion and entertainment was the Northeastern New York Carnival of Golf, promoted by the Knickerbocker Press and Evening News at Albany, N. Y., May 15-16-17.

Almost 50 clubs were asked to enter four-man teams to compete in handicap groups. Theme of the whole idea was to feature the dubs—"the dues-payers," as the promotion material termed the class. The Spalding troupe played an exhibition on Sunday, May 16, and the district pros competed in a golf show attraction. Municipal and fee-course players also played in an event.

The dinner which was held Saturday evening, drew almost 400.

Co-operating in putting on the successful event were the Northeastern N. Y. PGA, that section's greenkeepers' association, the women's golf association, golf clubs of the capital district, the Albany Chamber of Commerce and municipal authorities.

Wins \$20,000 Verdict—A jury in the Superior court of Judge Frankhouser at Chicago, May 5, awarded \$20,000 to a woman who had sued the Olympia Fields CC for \$50,000 as the result of injuries incurred on the club's toboggan slide Dec., 1935. Winter sports risks is one insurance matter that is not covered by many clubs.