

I HANDLE THE HEART

... and that's right in the locker-room, which has bigger 'play' than any other club department

Locker-room management is probably the least discussed phase of club operation, but one that has a highly important part in identifying the class of a club.

Look to the locker-room and bath section of a country club and you'll quickly get a straight tip on what kind of a club it is.

Dave Roberts, author of this article, is a veteran locker-room steward with successful experience at several of the prominent Eastern clubs. He is a man who makes a study of his work and his piece is well worth the time of club managers and officials. Roberts adds, in a letter:

"There are many other items of operation I have not discussed in detail, such as upkeep and care of locker-room, showers, soap, towels, toilet accessories, care of lockers and benches, ventilation, service bar, drying rooms and its problems, care of shoes, wet clothes and bathing suits, etc. Much can be said of each. But I've made enough notes to show the locker-room man really has a lot of work.

SET policies and the class or rating of the club cause locker-room operation to vary considerably in different clubs. The basic principle is the same, however. The layout of the locker-room has much to do with efficient

and economical operation. The number of exits and entrances should be limited in order that the man in charge, while working or serving members or guests, can check closely the arrival and departures. This is necessary especially in clubs where many of the men are in the habit of laying valuables or money on benches or lockers. My idea is one entrance and one exit. For locker-room division, I prefer a room divided in four sections, with convenient main aisles to service bars and showers. The St. Clair CC locker-room at Pittsburgh is ideal for working. Valet, shoe room, drying room and service bar are located off short main cross-aisle.

I plan my work, of course, according to the type of club and the play. Some clubs get quite a few morning golfers, others not many until after the luncheon period. The idea is to have all cleaning done and everything spic and span before any golfers arrive. Who wants to come into a locker-room that is in disorder? This oftentimes is a real problem, unless there is plenty of help.

Accommodates

Guests First

I make it a habit to be ready to receive the players as they arrive, make a note of the member's locker number for valet

reference, and assign guests to lockers as near their host as possible. Always keep all lockers on main aisles for guests, if possible. This places them convenient for service, such as packing bags and laying out clothes, and makes it easier to anticipate and attend to their needs.

What is the proper way to receive guests? Meet them at the entrance, greet them pleasantly, and unburden them. Show me the man who doesn't want to get relieved of his bag and clubs as soon as possible. Send his clubs to the pro-shop or caddie-master, assign him a locker, open his bag, remove golf shoes (don't forget to have a shoe horn handy), and lay out what golf clothes he desires to use. Some prefer to do this themselves.

Likes Valet Charges On Monthly Basis

After the golfers tee off, I have an assistant pick up the shoes to be shined and suits to be pressed. These are returned to their respective lockers as soon as possible. This service varies at many clubs. I like the monthly valet plan, whereby a man is charged by the month for pressing and shoe shining. In clubs where there is no definite policy pursued, some are inclined to put wet, muddy shoes in their lockers. You know what happens. Bad for the lockers and clothes and worse for the shoes.

OF THE CLUB!

By DAVID G. ROBERTS

I always keep a good supply of laces and insist on my shoe boys replacing any broken laces before the shined shoes are returned to the lockers. You would be surprised how careless some men are about their laces and how many we replace in a season. We have handled as many as 360 pairs of shoes on a busy Sunday. This is a real service and does not increase the operating budget very much.

Catalog all players mentally when they tee off, then in case of necessity, it is easy to locate any golfer on the course should he be needed for important telephone calls or telegrams. It has been my custom to list every golfer by locker number and guests' names each day. In case something is misplaced or forgotten, it is easier located. A question asked very frequently is: What time did Mr. Smith tee off? My list will show the order in which they went out and the time. This is very convenient, especially on busy days or on tournament days with eighty to a hundred strangers.

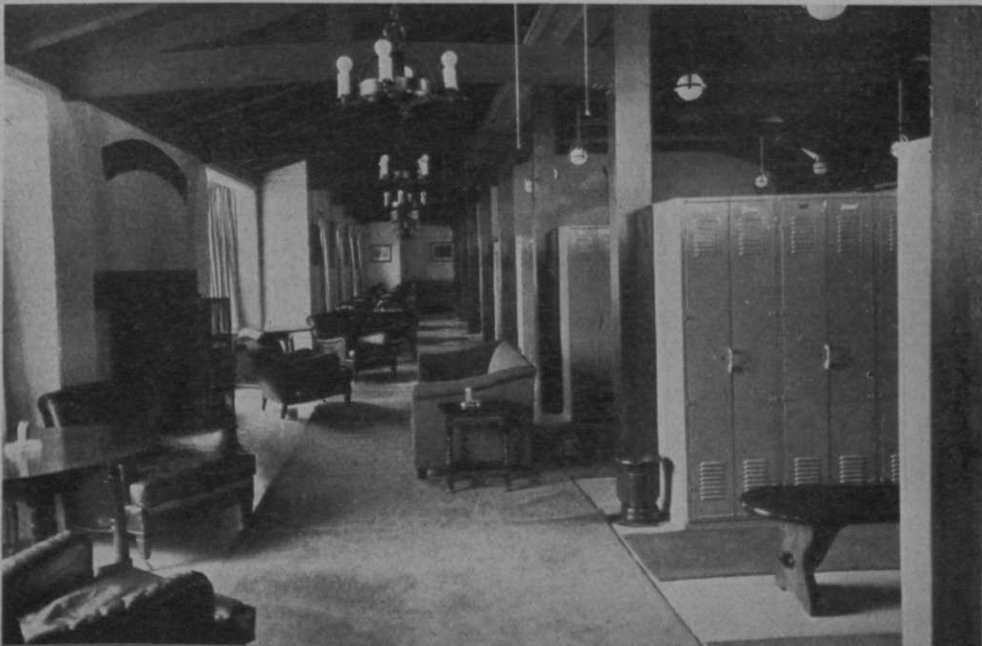
Having discussed the golfer's arrival, we will now be on the lookout for his return—to the nineteenth hole. This is

one hole he usually carries with a hard drive, especially if it has been a very hot day. No putts wasted on this green. Be careful how you approach him; he may have had a bad round. When the golfer returns to the clubhouse, I endeavor to get his orders for beverages as he comes in the locker-room, and deliver them in a hurry. As a rule they like to be sipping a nice tall cool drink while the bets are being settled. This is a time when the golfer really relaxes (if the losses are not too great) and begins to get what he calls real pleasure. It also is usually the time he is very irritable and impatient and wants quick service.

Bar Service Must Be Prompt

Have your bar and beverage department in first-class shape to serve the golfer promptly at the finish of his 18 holes, as some are always in a hurry to get a shower and depart, while others want to settle down to what I have heard called promiscuous drinking. I believe the real money maker for the club today is the comfortable lounging bar adjacent

The locker-room at Knollwood (Chicago District) provides golfers and their guests a real opportunity to combine lounging and nineteenth hole pleasures with the necessary duties of showers and clothes-changing. Main aisle is wide and spacious so that chairs and tables do not cause bothersome jams.



to the locker-room entrance. Don't make a warm golfer walk too far or wait too long to get a real drink. Many prefer to have their drinks served in the locker-room aisles at their lockers, but it has a tendency to clutter up the aisles and to interfere with the man who wants to dress and make a hasty departure. The fewer trays, glasses and bottles in the aisles, the easier it is to render personal service to members and guests. It is certainly very discouraging and disheartening to have someone upset a hi-ball near a locker where you have been very careful to lay out a guest's dress or street clothes. Much safer, too, not to have any glass where so many people are walking about in bare feet or slippers.

As soon as the golfers remove their shoes, the shoes are taken to the shoe-room. The guests' shoes are cleaned, polished and wrapped in waterproof paper ready for packing in his bag. The members' shoes are placed on shelves for airing after being cleaned and polished. These are returned to their respective lockers the following morning. If they are wet, they are cleaned and soaped with saddle soap and placed on shelves to be dried out overnight in a room heated to about 90, and polished in the morning. This keeps a golf shoe soft, comfortable and neat. There are other treatments you can give shoes, but never put them on hot radiators or in a dryer. Golf shoes can be marked for identification if desired or necessary.

Arranges Clothes

As Guest Bathes

While the guest is taking his shower, his clothes are laid out on the bench in front of his locker and golf shoes and clothes packed. Do not close the bag as a guest usually wants to check his bag before it is sent to the check room or his car. Most clubs do not employ sufficient help to extend this service to all players. I have found it keeps me hustling to render this service to just guests on Sundays or tournament days.

In packing clothes, proper bags are convenient and waterproof paper wonderful for wrapping wet shoes or damp bathing suits.

I have visited many golf clubs in the past twelve years and I am frank in saying I found many of the locker-rooms undermanned. To maintain and operate the average locker-room today, one employee for every twenty-five golfers would be a good average. Even this would not

make it possible to render the service many golfers are demanding today. I am very much inclined to believe that the chairmen of the house committees and club managers need to give this considerable attention. The man in the locker-room at the present time is required to work 12 to 18 hours a day to accomplish what I have mentioned, to say nothing of many other details it would take too long to list. No man can render efficient service and be pleasant under so many trying conditions encountered in a day's work, when he continually works that long each day. Believe me, we sure catch it with daylight saving time and the increasing number of people who play their evening round of golf.

As a rule, on week days, I "hit deck" not later than 10 a. m., eat my lunch on the fly and sit down for dinner when the last golfer leaves the locker-room. Dinner for me is usually between 11 and 12 p. m., with two hours' work to do before bed time. I notice in most clubs this same condition exists. The clubs have not changed their budgets to conform to the change in play. Since the depression the peak play at many clubs during the week has been from 5:30 p. m. to 7:30 p. m., with many starting out as late as 8:30 to get in at least nine holes. A long, long day, and more golfers now than ever!

A real locker-room man can usually supply a member or guest with any article or piece of clothing he may have forgotten to bring to the club, and be prepared to serve him well in any emergency from matching lost buttons to furnishing dress collars when his has been wilted on the ballroom floor during the evening. Always have collar and cuff buttons available, corn plasters, instruments for trimming nails and corns, first-aid equipment, and don't forget the aspirin and soda-mint tablets. By all means be prepared to relieve his miserable feeling the morning after the night before. If there is anything required by member or guest you do not have in your service kit, be prepared to supply it on the next request. I have always adhered closely to this principle and it has helped me to improve the personal service.

Memphis Wants Managers—Club Managers Association of America is polling its members to determine place for the organization's 1938 convention. Memphis, Denver and Detroit have made bids for the affair, with Memphis making a strong mail campaign to win the convention.