

LATE SEASON PLAY IS UP

By KARL SUTPHIN

WE'RE on our way, and what's better, we know where we're going." That's the consensus of opinion among informed golf officials after looking over the progress made this year in extending the golf season. For years golf clubs have been calling things off as though timed by a clock right after Labor Day, but club officials have made quite a little progress this season in maintaining heavy play right up to the time cold weather sets in.

The added value given club and members individually by extending the golf season past the "regular" closing time makes quite a little difference to the club treasury and to the member's pocketbook, and many more clubs have been enjoying the benefits of a longer season this year. The amount of money golf costs each member is spread over a longer period, giving him more time to get his money's worth out of the cost of his membership. And the more time the member spends around the club, the more money he's going to spend around the clubhouse.

Snowbirds Plan to Swing Into Action

Another encouraging sign this fall has been the formation of many new "snowbird" leagues and scheduling of winter events at the Midwestern clubs. Whereas several years ago those who ventured out during the dead of winter were looked upon by many as being more than a little bold, to say the least, it will be quite common this winter to see plenty of golfers on northern links.

Play this year has been above 1936 rounds, but reports being received by GOLFDOM from Midwestern courses this fall indicate more late season play than for any previous year. Edward L. Warner, secy., Detroit District GA, reports: "Play at the private clubs of the district during September was heavier than any other time during the year, and if the good weather continues, I am sure that October will be almost as big, with no serious letdown until the first of November."

Robert "Red" Strauss, Cincinnati's Golf Supervisor, says: "September play at the municipal courses in Cincinnati showed a big increase over the same month last

year, but poor weather during the early part of the month kept the increased play from being as big as we had hoped. However, it warmed up during the last few days of the month and play increased considerably. Indications are that October play will be way ahead of last year."

Huge increase in play in the Chicago District has taken place this fall, according to veteran club officials and department heads of the district. Even blustery weather on a couple of the weekends failed to keep the rounds of play from showing a very substantial increase over the 1936 figures.

Calendar No So Vital

That club officials are becoming aware of the good grade-A dough they are passing up when they fail to encourage late season play can be told from the number responding to GOLFDOM's offer last month to supply free of charge a list of suggested golf events that can be put on in late season. They realize that golf has been "choked by the calendar" too long, and that they are the ones to do something about it.

However, golf clubs have helped out considerably this year in maintaining interest right up to the last moment by the way they have been handling tournaments and in their scheduling of special events. Many clubs formerly called their late summer tournaments by titles that indicated the season was at an end, but we haven't seen so much of that this season. And, of course, 1937 has been the best business year since 1931, and it's easy to believe that a member is going to feel a lot more like playing golf when he isn't bothered so much about what is going on at the office.

One of the leading contributions to late season rounds at many courses is the huge increase in business the driving ranges and practice courses have shown this year. Many thousands found out what fun it was to sock the ball and toward the end of

the summer went out to the munny and fee courses to find out what they had not learned by standing up there and hitting one ball after another.

Major tournaments were wisely scheduled during 1937, and the richest golf event for quite a number of years in this country was played the latter part of September in Boston—the \$12,000 Belmont Open. Big tournaments such as this played comparatively late in the year will go far in keeping up active interest in golf. Of course, major tournaments have been held late in the year before, but generally they are played on more southerly courses than the Belmont layout in Boston. The PGA tourney last November at Pinehurst went a long way in keeping the word "golf" on the tips of many tongues for a longer period of time. Pinehurst is generally considered to be in the South sector, but it isn't so far removed from the North Central states so that temperature, or the time it takes to get there would make a great deal of difference.

The Women's National, scheduled rather late in the year as a usual thing, was played even a little later this year, with the ladies finishing up at the Memphis (Tenn.) CC on October 9. Memphis, too, is not so far away from the slightly cooler breezes the Northland is getting that time of year.

The approximately 200,000 players introduced during the past year to golf through group golf classes conducted throughout the country by PGA members, as a result of the Pro Promotion Plan, have also contributed greatly to this noticeable later season play. Golf is new to these players, and they like it, and they're going to stick at it often and late until they find out something about it.

There's a long way to go yet, but certainly we're on the way. Perhaps if the improvement seen in extending the season is continued next year, and then the next, golf clubs and manufacturers alike can get in on some of the dough they should have been getting all the time before depressions and weather and such got in their licks.

Martin Heads Group Planning Golf Center at N.Y. Fair

B. Martin, veteran golf journalist and historian, heads a syndicate planning a sports center for the 1939 World's Fair at New York City. Golf is to be featured, with a clubhouse on a membership basis,

conveniently located in the clubhouse grounds.

There also will be a museum hall in the sports center. In this will be displayed many sports relics and a large number of the world's most famous trophies for sports. An exhibition hall for display of sporting goods manufacturers' products, indoor and outdoor restaurants and bars and an outdoor putting green will be among other details of the sports center.

Martin at present is secy. and tournament manager for the Shenecossett CC, Eastern Point, New London, Conn.

Ohio Greensmen Incorporate to Limit Liability of Group

THE Ohio Golf Course Supt. Assn., has been incorporated as an organization "not for profit" under state laws. Purpose of the corporation is to define liability in the event of accidents at demonstrations or at tournaments.

Officials of the Ohio organization proposed the action after a social organization of employees of a large manufacturing company in the state got in individual jams as a result of an accident that happened during one of the organization's meetings.

This matter of incorporation "not for profit" is worth further investigation by greenerkeeper and pro organizations. The Federal Trade Commission complaint against the PGA on the ball deal named each member of the association as co-defendant. If cash penalties were involved, each member would be running the risk of paying off his share.

Coast PGA Seeks Facts—Merchandise committee of the Southern California Section PGA has been soliciting data on the used club proposition from the Section's members. Questions asked include: "What margin of profit do you plan to make on used clubs? Would a 'blue book' be of value in determining trade-in values, or would it be better to allow a definite percentage of profit over and above refinishing labor costs? Would you favor a central disposal depot for used clubs?"

Traps Bring Pro Cash—Trap- and skeet-shooting as fall and winter features of club outdoor programs mean a new piece of profit for pros in the sale of shells. Several pros have done very well during the past three years in this shooting supply business.