

Golf Goes on the AIR

Once a week from station WREN out in Lawrence, Kas., comes a golf program that has clicked big. A big part of its success lies in the policy of using plenty of names of Kansas and Missouri golfers.

IN ONE of the issues of GOLFDOM last fall was a suggestion to get golf on the radio. Golf is on the radio for 150 miles around Lawrence, Kansas. The area takes in Kansas City, Leavenworth, Atchison, St. Joseph, Mo., and Topeka, Kans. There are nearly 40 courses in this vicinity and figuring two-hundred members to each club we have, certainly, at least 8,000 interested golf listeners.

The plan of "Golf on the Air" originated with Earl A. Farris, superintendent of the World Co. in Lawrence, who is also tournament committee chairman at the Lawrence CC. He asked Vernon (Bing) Smith if he could "build up" the Kansas Open golf tournament over station WREN a few years ago. Smith was glad to have the tournament news and Ronnie Ashburn, WREN sports snap-shooter, was asked to donate part of his 15 minute 10 o'clock program for publicity on the tournament.

At First, Program Flopped

Farris then asked Ashburn for a few minutes each Friday evening for a regular golf program. This was done for a few weeks, but it was just a lot of words on golf and what it did for the people who played the game. It was hard to get material and find people who would come to the studio to give a five minute interview on what golf did for them, when they could be at a friend's house playing bridge. So the broadcast faded out.

Farris was persistent. He knew that golf could be put on the air and made interesting. He writes a column twice a week for the Lawrence Daily Journal-World on golf happenings at the Lawrence CC. While working on this column one evening, the idea about putting it into a Golf Newscast came to him. People listened to the news at noon and in the evening about Hitler and Chamberlain, so why shouldn't they like to hear about someone who had just made an eagle on

a hard par-4 hole. So again he went to Bing Smith.

This time he had something constructive to give the listeners. Here is the plan:

"Speed" Swift, a salesman in the Kansas City area for the Wilson Sporting Goods Co., makes all of the golf courses and sees all of the professionals. Speed is the official representative or reporter for the column of the air and asks each professional he calls on for recent "holes-in-one," eagles, freak-shots, club dances, bridge parties, tournaments, and the like, in fact anything that is news and that other people would be interested in.

Names Numerous on Radio Program

Speed then writes the news to Farris, who prepares it for the broadcast. Here is a sample of the news as it is told over the air waves by Farris:

Wolf Rimann, pro at Hillcrest, had to shoot a 73 the other day to beat Hap Gardner. . . . There is to be a St. Patrick's dance at Hillcrest tomorrow evening. . . . The Lawrence CC folks are having a dance this evening and from reports just before coming to the studio, a good time was being had by all. . . . Marius Ahlstrom, pro at the Shawnee layout in Topeka, made a hole-in-one the other day. The ace was made on the par 3, 143-yd number 13. Marius has been trying 12 years to get the job done, as that is how long he has been playing golf—but John Catron, at the Marland GCse in Shawnee, Okla., playing on the No. 9 hole, knocked in a 231-yd. ace. This was the second time he had ever been on a golf course. . . . Mrs. Harry Sparks, at the Indian Hills club in Kansas City, was guest of honor at a dinner bridge, given by Mrs. Joseph Sparks, yesterday. . . . Harry Nevin, of the Lawrence club, was elected councilman from the first ward at the city election yesterday. . . .

And so on for about five minutes. A lot of names can be said and a lot of news given in the allotted time.

Farris breaks the monotony of 'just news.' He begins the program, after the introduction by Ronnie Ashburn, with news; then after a few minutes, he introduces the guest or guests of the evening. These folks talk on golf; and they are people who are paid by golf.

Farris generally has a question and answer game about golf on the program. He has some pro answer questions about rules—or greenkeepers talk about the up-



Your Name will be heard
on WREN _____ Nite
at 10 p. m.
PLEASE LISTEN IN
Wilson
GOLF EQUIPMENT

*We Hope You'll
Be Listening!*

PROFESSIONAL GOLF REPR.

When a local golfer gets one of these postcards, you can bet he will be among the listeners every minute of the broadcast.

keep of the course and the greens. The professionals are always interviewed by Swift or Ashburn. This is to break the monotony of news. A few questions and answers are put on, and then on comes more news, then more questions.

One of the interesting features of the broadcast is the manner of increasing the number of listeners. A golfer whose name is to be read on the next program receives a card saying that his name will be mentioned on WREN and he is asked to listen in. The card is signed by Speed, and if the party in the news address cannot be found at home he is called at his business address by a girl from either WREN or the Wilson company and told that his name will be on the air.

Much comment is drifting in to the local professionals about the program, people wondering where the radio station gets the names and information—especially since WREN is located in Lawrence, Kans., and news is also being given about Kansas City, Leavenworth, and Atchison golfers.

Listeners Guess Scores

Another feature of the program is a Blind Bogey. Six players are picked, one from Kansas City, Topeka, Leavenworth, Atchison, St. Joseph and Lawrence. The listeners are asked to guess the score of any one of the players who will leave the tee at his respective club at 1:30 Sunday afternoon. All the listener has to do is write one player's name on a postcard or in a letter, together with the score he thinks the player will shoot, sign his name and address and send to WREN. If he guesses the correct score, the listener receives a new golf ball. In case of ties the names are placed in a hat and the winner's name drawn. We have had hun-

dreds of replies and the season is just getting under way.

Farris was asked if he thought golf could be put on the air by any radio station, and he explained it this way: "Getting the news is the hardest thing to do, and it should be handled like Speed Swift does it in the Kansas City area. Chicago, for instance, could be covered by a couple of golf supply dealers' representatives. The broadcast should be done in the evening as the golfers are generally "holed" in by 10 p.m.

The broadcast should be built up by the postcard idea, and if any one tells you that he is not interested when his name goes out over the air, just put that man, woman or golfer down as not stating the truth. "I know," Farris said in closing, "because every time I mention someone on the air or in my column, the party I have mentioned always comes around and tells me that I have a very good column, or that they liked the program last evening."

Pro's Work Lauded.—Any number of 'little things' are always coming up around a golf club that either put an employee in a more favorable light among the members, or which may help to cause some unpleasantness.

Anyway, along comes a copy of a letter that James J. Ross, president of the Cherokee GC, Louisville, sent out to the members during January, calling attention to plans for the coming season, and which included a fine tribute to the work Charles Oehler, pro, has been doing for Cherokee. Said Ross, in part: "I wish to call to your attention the no small share Charles Oehler contributed to the success of the club by being on the job early and late and giving unstintingly of his time."