

## IN THE DOLDRUMS?

This article is crammed full of tips telling how to get out of the doldrums, if you're in, and how not to get into them, if you're out

By Frederick G. Meyer

ONCE in awhile some golf club goes into a slump. The clubhouse porch is as deserted in June as it is in December; the woodchucks dig holes unmolested in the fairways; the few caddies have plenty of time to polish up their Black Jack game. Joe, Charley, and Wilbur can't find an extra man to make their Sunday morning foursome; there's nobody on the veranda to swap gossip with Mrs. Smith; and there isn't enough money in the treasury to patch the leak in the locker-house roof. That's the doldrums.

### Now's the Time to Check-Up

If your club has never hit the doldrums, you may use these suggestions to see that it never does; if it has, you may use them right now to pep things up. For, from a selfish point of view, haven't you noted that the sleeping or disinterested member never takes lessons, never buys clubs or balls? And, more selfishly, some day the club might awake, wonder what's happening, shift the blame to you, and you'll be on the outside looking in. It isn't the easiest thing in the world to find a fair club, when you have been bounced from one for "doing nothing."

Start first with the members you have. How many are active golfers? How many

come to the club for any other reasons? Apply the pressure to the stay-aways. By a little clever manipulation — which depends for its success on your tact and ability — show the active members the state of affairs. They most likely have recognized it but were waiting for someone to take the lead. Subtly as possible play politics at the next club election. Undoubtedly the present moguls have been in there since the days of plus-fours and sun-visors; undoubtedly they haven't done more than keep the books straight in the past five years; undoubtedly they wouldn't mind a bit, if relieved of the "responsibility" of the office.

### Officers Must Be Workers

What type of men should the new officers be? Let a few "don'ts" be your guide. Don't elect Martin B. Moneybags, just because he is well known and influential. Success in one field doesn't necessarily make for success in another, although everything in America from the presidency on down is run on the assumption that it does. Don't pick a man who is prominent in a service club, in politics, in anything else that takes up spare time. Don't choose anyone but a man who thinks as much of the club as you do. If you do

Pueblo, Colo., Recreation Commission did some fine promotion early this spring plugging its City Park Course, and recent reports show that its efforts were well received by the Pueblo golfers.

The Commission's committee on golf did a real selling job in the letter and folder picturing and describing the course, which was sent to all known Pueblo golfers, pointing out that the course had been considerably improved during the past winter, and promising that the regular greens would be ready for them by April first. And they were!

need an ornament, an extra vice-president never did any harm.

Check up on the men who used to be members. Some of them dropped out because of controversies that time has answered; others because they couldn't afford the club. They may now find their finances in better condition. Others may have children who have grown up to the age where they could make good use of golf club membership. Try to find out why the former members resigned and go after them for reinstatement.

Now for a few improvements to the course and the clubhouse. Change appeals to all people and they usually look on every change as a great improvement. "Boy, have you seen No. 6 at the club. They've made it shorter and have taken off that out-of-bounds penalty." Immediately Joe Duffer remembers No. 6 and his usual eight on it. With that changed, he can shoot good golf. Nothing keeps them coming like good scores and a chance for better ones.

#### Don't Neglect the Clubhouse

Changes wouldn't hurt the clubhouse either. Redecorate a room, add a wing, alter something. And you might even get some added action and interest by having a campaign to raise the necessary funds.

How about the club's social life? Although there are many feminine golfers, there are many good wives who have never played the game and never will. What are you doing for them? Do you have something to attract them while their husbands are out losing quarters? Do you have organized bridge, a porch with a view, plenty of reading material, play rooms for the younger children? Do that much—then the dances and parties will take care of themselves. You know the ladies!

Now we want some new members, younger members. Sickness, death, position changes, and a host of other reasons make heavy inroads on a club year after

year. To keep your club at a peak, you must have new members to fill up the ranks. A membership drive more often than not brings in the briars with the wheat; so it isn't advisable. Instead, talk it over with the active members and let each one make a few contacts. They are sure to know some newcomer in the community; some young man or woman who is just becoming established and needs a club as a recreational and social hub.

How about the club's initiation fee and yearly dues? Even if you tap only the blue-bloods, there is more than a possibility that the ten year drought has even affected their financial wells. Check on all dues and fees. If they need a revision, go to bat to revise them. Remember, more active members, even if they do have less, mean more for you and the club than a lot of millionaires with arthritis.

#### Look After New Members

Your new member should be more than a name on the roster. See to it yourself that he is having a good time. Not only introduce him to everyone but see that he is thrown in with the old-timers, both on the course and at the club proper. It's your job to be a host as well as a teacher. Arrange for him to be placed on committees, to be given club responsibilities. A good start is 99% of the battle.

The old members are now back at the club and the new members are doing their level best to break a hundred. Let's do a bit more to keep up the interest, to turn the publicity spotlight on the club (and you), and thus avoid future doldrums.

The first thing to do is to grab a tournament of some sort. Of course, the ordinary club can't have the National Open or even the state amateur, but there must be something floating around that you can have. Even a left-handed tournament for insurance men is better than nothing. Or, if worst comes to worst, institute a new tournament. Inter-city, inter-county, inter-profession tournaments are sure-fire.

The success, however, is due to the publicity the affair obtains beforehand. The more interest you have in it, both in and outside the club, the more good it will do you. You will be the goat for this publicity. You will have to tell long stories to newspaper men; shiver before microphones; spend long hours with your typewriter. But if it's a boost for your club, it's a boost for you.

When your tournament is out of the way, pull a few stunts. They are good for the club morale, good for the publicity.

I am not going to give them out to you as original thoughts, for most of them are not. But I can say that most of them have been tried and that their result meant a lot of fun to the club members and a revival of interest for some time.

1. "One club" contest, with the members drawing for the club each will have to play for the round.
2. Moonlight golf or golf under lights. This is a good start for a summer evening party or dance.
3. Airplane golf (rather risky and expensive). You play the game by dropping a golf ball from a plane as near as possible to the green. If you don't bop your partner, he holes out. Don't forget government permission to drop things from a plane.
4. Distance driving contests. Have several members drive a ball from some point in the town to the club. Police protection is easily available for this horse-play.
5. Golf leagues, run like a baseball league. This keeps up red-hot interest during a whole season. Allow teams to trade players, to buy them, etc.
6. Golf classes, especially for the younger men and women. You know where to stop—just where they'll begin to want lessons.
7. Motion pictures of the members in action. These are amusing and can be very instructive.
8. Have special golf events for the children of club members. Father and son tournaments, mother and daughter, and a mixture of the two, make for family interest.
9. Have other interests besides golf, for the most avid duffer tires at times. Arrange such things at the club as tennis, ping-pong, shuffle board, archery, billiards, horseshoes, swimming, shooting—all are come-ons and stay-ons.
10. Give every player a chance to feel like the knight in the tournament. Give his non-playing friends and relatives a chance to watch him in action. Wifey would just as soon wait on the course as any other place, provided she's comfortable. In fact if she can tag along and can see part of the round, it might be the difference between hubby's presence regularly and his just as regular absence.

Good luck, Mr. Pro, on getting out or keeping out of the doldrums. Remember: running a good club is an upstream row—rest on the oars and back you go.

## G.S.A. Educational Conference Will Aid Eastern Greensmen

THE FIRST Eastern Sectional Educational Conference, sponsored by the Greenkeeping Supts. Assn., and its Eastern affiliates, will be held at the Canoe Brook CC, Summit, N. J., June 5-6. Although the meeting is being sponsored by the GSA as a part of its service to its members, it is open to all who are interested in golf course management and maintenance problems.

This is the first time that any golf organization has ever attempted to stage an event where scientific experts will lecture and actually conduct turf experiments in the field. In addition to talks to be given by noted turf experts, a trip through the New Jersey Experimental Station is scheduled, at which time there will be an actual test and talk on the subject of Japanese Beetle control, supervised by Dr. Howard B. Sprague of the station. He will be assisted by practical experts from the GSA and, since this form of turf pest is becoming increasingly prevalent, the experiment should prove very interesting to all parties interested in turf management.

### Timed for Active Season

This meeting has been purposely scheduled during the growing season so that all individuals may reap the most practical benefit from it.

Golf officials in the Eastern section have indicated an interest in this new and educational project and among those who have promised to attend are Robt. F. Arnott, of the N. J. Golf Assn., and Eugene L. Larkin of the Metropolitan Golf Assn. Both of these men are chairmen of their respective groups. In addition, personal invitations have been extended to all club officials in the Eastern area along with invitations to all persons within the golf industry. Sheets have also been prepared to be displayed on club bulletin boards, calling attention of the members to the meeting.

The GSA committee in charge of this Eastern Educational Conference is headed by Ed Cale, superintendent at the Canoe Brook CC and recently elected director of the GSA. He will be assisted by J. A. Gormley, vice-president of the GSA, Joseph Ryan, 1938 GSA president, Robert Mitchell, John Anderson, and Eberhard Steiniger.