

Racine's Clubhouse Is Gold Mine

By Marie G. Heuer

PILING up money in the clubhouse treasury can be pretty much of a headache, since the ten year drought has affected the bankrolls of even the best intentioned members. It no longer worries the Meadowbrook CC at Racine, Wis., however. Since opening its dining room to community organizations, club profits have not only enabled the club to pay the winter heating bills without an extra tax on members, but have doubled the value of club stock and have made possible a number of the improvements which the club used to just dream about.

Golfers at Meadowbrook still use the course on an exclusive membership basis, hire their own pro and hold tournaments for members (with enough money in the treasury for extras). On week-ends, you'll not find an outsider at the bar or on the course—unless they're special guests of regular members.

On weekdays, however, the clubhouse is run on a strictly commercial basis. Smart promotion has made it the city's most popular rendezvous for dinners, banquets, and dances of every organization in town—from the Lion's club monthly meetings to the charity balls of the Junior League. If club members want an evening during the week, they speak up 48 hours in advance for a reservation.

"Our present policy," said Herman Lynch, manager of the club, "is in line with trends in progressive golf clubs throughout the country. Club members like the privileges of a private course, but many clubs can't break even unless business methods are used to earn operating expenses."

Book Big Outside Business

Since the plan was introduced two years ago, Meadowbrook has booked from 15 to 26 dinners each month of the year except March (a dull month on any social calendar, and an ideal vacation month for Meadowbrook's manager).

First quality food is served at every dinner, with the kitchen operating on a break-even basis. Porterhouse steaks and out-of-season fruits and vegetables are offered on many of the dinners, at the unusually low price of 75 cents or \$1.00 a plate. No fee is charged for the use of the clubhouse for social meetings or for dances after dinner.

An excellent orthophonic victrola and radio is also at the disposal of groups who don't care to hire a special orchestra.

To build up good will, the management does not charge for excess plates if attendance falls within 20 of the number reserved. If more than 20 plates are left over, the management splits the cost with the organization.

But here's the trick. The Meadowbrook bar adjoins the dining room. Decorated in cheerful Mexican motif, it attracts many a diner for a convivial toast. 200 business men at a dinner can help the club to clear a couple of hundred dollars profit in one evening. When 400 turn out for a dance, the bar contributes a lot to the success of the party—and makes a profitable evening for the country club as well.

Many Lures to Outsiders

"No dining place in town can compete with our inducements," Lynch says. "Many of our local business clubs have turned from noon lunch meetings to evening get-togethers, with an afternoon golf tournament at special rates if some of the members belong to Meadowbrook. It takes only a few good reports from business men and women for other clubs to get interested. That, plus a talk with an organization officer brings me an invitation to present my proposition at a club meeting."

Until the new program was inaugurated, the club had been operating in the red for years. Stockholders had been losing money steadily since 1929, when they were caught with debts on a new clubhouse, heavy taxes, and a sudden cessation of outright donations.

Until 1937, club managers received their revenue by taking profits from the restaurant and bar, while the club paid for heating and lighting throughout the year. Stockholders had to shell out an extra \$1,500 to \$1,800 from their own pockets to cover losses. During these years directors winced when it came to offering special purses or prizes for tournaments or exhibition matches.

Complaints of club members led to an investigation of club finances in 1937. The clubhouse was amputated from the golf club, with a separate manager in charge of each division, and the clubhouse put on a business basis.

To date the indebtedness has been re-

duced to one fourth of its 1937 proportions. Besides, a number of other improvements have been made. The bar was moved from the basement to a spot adjoining the dining room, and decorated in Pueblo Indian style of old Mexico. The women's porch was cleaned up and equipped with modernistic charts and tables. New equipment in the kitchen and bar helped to take care of the increase in business. The installation of a modern pressure heater has cut \$100 off the annual fuel bill. Greens now receive water from a reservoir built to warm the water from the deep well before it is run on the greens.

During the next few months the club plans to equip the basement with a new system of showers so that members can have greater privacy from locker to shower. To provide more room for guests, the glass porch will be extended around three sides of the building. The inside wall will be constructed of Bakelite, indirectly lighted with a marquis of softly diffused colored light.

The reduction of membership dues from \$75 to \$25 has attracted many of the town's younger golfers to the club. During the last two years membership has increased from 150 to 225.

"Club members like our present program," adds Lynch, "because it gives them all the privileges of a private course without the worry of how expenses will be paid."

Heavy Promotion of High School Golf to Start Soon

GOLF in high schools will be given a strong boost by Scholastic, the American High School Weekly, and by Scholastic Coach, a monthly widely circulated among high school athletic authorities. Herb McCracken, former U. of Pittsburgh athletic star, is publisher of both magazines.

More than 16,000 high school and prep school athletic directors are the objectives of the golf promotion series written by Ben Thomson, golf coach at Yale university, for the Scholastic Coach. Ben will tell them how to get golf instruction programs going in their schools and in his series emphasizes the vital part a competent golf professional takes in the school instruction program. He sets the stage splendidly for follow-up by energetic and well qualified pros. Thomson's series began in October.

In the spring Scholastic's 600,000 high

school boys and girls will get the golf series which is tied into a tournament plan, with Scholastic magazine giving prizes to the winners.

Golf pros who are aware of the benefits, present and future, of tying into the high school promotion, may secure complete details of the Scholastic publications' campaign by writing McCracken at 250 E. 43d st., New York City.

IT'S ON THE HOUSE

By TOM REAM
Mgr., Westmoreland CC

The pleased member is the best developer of new members. His "word of mouth praise" does the trick.

The employee who has worked in too many clubs is suspected of never having worked for any.

The burning cigarette has met its match in a burn-proof enamel based on Bakelite resin.

The better the clubhouse and golf course is, the easier it is to keep the membership filled.

Yes, you are in the club business, but is the club business in you?

A good club employee is one who has learned that some people like more service than do others.

The fact that members don't know what they want does not matter in the club business if the manager knows what they want.

There's no percentage in giving quick service if it results in sloppy service.

Those who fail in the club business do so because they think it requires no special knowledge.

Maybe the member is impatient, and maybe again, the service isn't as snappy as we think it is.