

INSIDE GOLF

by
L. B. ICELY



Wilson
SPORTING
GOODS CO.

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My dear

Your letter about the lag in operating income at your club, due to adverse weather in early season, presents a problem that is being successfully handled.

The problem is being solved at many clubs where full advantage has been taken of the services of a competent professional. I have before me figures on the May house income of the club where old is professional.

These figures were sent to me by the manager of the club. He said he thought I would be interested in this evidence of pro-manager cooperation as a sidelight to this series of letters from my own mail which is running in Golfdom.

There were showers every week-end of May at this club. Still, the house revenue was 47% above that of May 1939 when not a week-end was marred by bad weather.

Wrote, in part, Mr. the manager at

"Our season usually gets well under way by mid-April. This year frequent April showers put us well behind our budgeted income.

"..... (the pro) and I were both suffering. He had not made the sales of equipment he'd expected. We knew that our members were eager to play golf because the late winter membership drive had brought 43 new members. This is a record for our club.

"We sat in his house one night and wondered what we could do to handle the situation. Neither of us believes in just hanging around and complaining about bad weather.

"You will see from enclosed program of dinner and buffet supper events how we made this rainy May the best our club-house ever has had.

"We showed after dinner, one night each week, movies (the pro) had taken last year of members and their wives and children. The subjects were given free lessons in the lounge..... handles this very well. The members are not embarrassed and everybody enjoys the sessions.

"At 11 P.M. we have a light buffet supper, free. The bar revenue and dinner revenue more than warrant the free lunch.

"Two other nights during the month we had lectures and demonstrations on the rules of golf. It surprised all how interesting the rules of the game could be made when they were demonstrated by staged examples such as put on in our lounge. The second rules session was by popular demand. Members brought 108 guests to this second rules evening. We were not able to clear the clubhouse until 2:15 A.M.

"The whole idea of the plan we worked out was to make members appreciate that golf club membership was not simply a week-end proposition. We reasoned that the cost of a golf club membership was an extravagance in many cases—especially during a bad weather session—unless the club presented an entertainment and sports program that could compete with the movies and the night clubs.

"During May sold \$1,347 in clubs, balls and bags. Much of this revenue, he says, was from new members and old members who did not often come into his shop.

"By request of the club's officials and members we are continuing these week night affairs throughout the season, and intend to keep members coming to the club and playing golf late into the fall by having as featured guests football coaches and players who are friends of"

* * * *

I think that this letter from the club's manager will suggest to you how your club can catch up to its season's requirements of operating income. Get your own pro and manager in on your problem and let them work out a program that establishes the club as a center of interest throughout the week and through the waking hours.

"Celebrity Nights" presenting sports headliners as dinner guests make another strong attraction for what otherwise would be off nights at country clubs. Helen Hicks Harb, Mrs. Opal Hill, Helen Dettweiler, Gene Sarazen, Ralph Guldahl and Sam Snead of our staff often appear at these affairs when their bookings permit. I am sure that other golf playing equipment manufacturers also will be happy to cooperate in arranging appearances when members of their advisory staffs happen to be scheduled into the vicinity of the enterprising clubs.

If you merely worry about the weather, you're sunk. The sun's shining again and heaven knows this country needs golf plenty to keep its nerves and health in good condition. With best regards to you and our good friend, your neighbor I am

*We favor adequate preparedness
for National Defense*

L.B. Icely
President
Wilson Sporting Goods Co.