

# How To Hold An OPEN

By VERNE WICKHAM

**Any club can organize an Open Tourney,  
but it takes hard work to put it over**

**W**ANT to stage an open tournament, with \$1,000 for professionals, and trophies and prizes for amateurs, and do it with practically no cost to your club? It can be done!

For a number of years a Pacific Coast golf club has staged just such a \$1,000 open golf tournament and each year has been able to balance the budget.

Here's how it is done.

## Sponsor Is First Need

First, find a sponsor or underwriter. This individual or organization must be willing to take a small risk. Weather and other conditions might throw a monkey-wrench into the best laid plans and a loss might be marked up on the ledger. The sponsor puts up \$1,075.00 in the bank to the credit of the golf club at least sixty days before the event. This is to guarantee the purse. If no sponsor is to be found, ten club members at \$100 each can turn the trick. At the worst they might lose fifty bucks apiece and what's fifty bucks among friends.

A simple contract should be drawn up between the golf club and the sponsor so that all concerned know the details of the deal.

The seventy-five dollars added to the \$1000 purse is for a public liability policy to protect the club and the sponsors. Some galleryite might get hit on the head and sue. The amount of this policy will vary but sufficient protection should be obtainable for this amount.

Second, start to work. The president of the club should name the following committees: entry, scoring, publicity, ticket, hospitality, trophy, police and finance.

The entry committee takes care of the entries. The scoring committee is responsible for the scoring. Put your professional staff and low handicapped amateurs on this group. The publicity committee speaks for itself. So does the hospitality committee. Half of the success of these affairs is having a good hospitality committee to make the entrants feel welcome. You

want them back next year! The trophy committee gets the prizes, the police committee handles the details of taking care of the crowd and parking, the ticket committee sells the tickets and the finance committee handles the dough. The wise selection of key men in these committees is half the battle for there's work to be done, lots of it!

With every committee functioning, you approach the date of the event. What do the entrants pay for a whack at the \$1,000 and what is the playing schedule?

## Four-Day Program

Here's the schedule of the Pacific Coast events. Thursday, the club holds an amateur-woman-pro sweepstakes as a warm-up event. Each pro teams with a man and a woman golfer in a best ball event. The man gets half his handicap (six stroke or 12 handicap limit), the woman gets full handicap except on the three pars (14 handicap is the limit), the pro plays from scratch. Prizes for the pro are: first \$25, second \$15, third \$10. Amateur prizes go both to the man and woman of the winning combinations.

On Friday you hold the first 18 holes of your 72-hole open. The whole field plays, as it does on Saturday for the second 18 holes. Sunday the final 36 holes are played by the low 40 and ties among the professionals, plus the low ten and ties in four handicap divisions among the amateurs. This gives you a field of over 80 golfers, which is about all you can comfortably get around 36 holes and give the gallery the proper kind of show.

The professional split of the purse goes like this; first, \$300; second, \$200; third, \$100; fourth and fifth, \$50; sixth, seventh and eighth, \$35; ninth, tenth and eleventh, \$25; twelfth, \$20; thirteenth and fourteenth, \$15; fifteenth and sixteenth \$10.

Amateur prizes go for low gross and low net in four divisions. These divisions are: scratch to 7, 8 to 10, 11 to 13 and 14 to 18. By spreading the amateur field out to include the high handicap players you

boost the amateur entry and here is where most of your money is coming.

Most sections will find it hard to get over 50 professionals. The travelling professionals will not come for so small a purse and so you're left with an area of one day's trip, or at the most, 500 miles, so concentrate on that amateur field. There will be enough pros to spread around and your low handicap amateurs will welcome the chance to play with the pros. Trophies for the amateurs should be good ones. Pay off low gross and low net with good prizes and then from there on down give out as many prizes as you can have donated. Business firms dealing with the club, and in the club's membership, will be found glad to cooperate. Take hams, groceries, oil and gas orders, merchandise, anything. Prizes should extend down to at least fifth spot in each division. Figure on about forty prizes and you'll keep everybody satisfied. The item of \$150 to be found in the balance sheet to follow is to be used to buy cups and engraving for the major prizes.

#### Expect These Expenses

Here are a few of your expenses: (1) Score cards—1,500 will probably cost around \$12.50. Print special tournament cards and watch your local rules. A little time spent on the rules before the tournament starts will save a lot of argument when the chips are down. (2) Ribbons and badges—300 for contestants (some wives will need them to get in at the gate), 50 for the press and 50 for the committee will do the job. Cost about \$8.00. (3) Entry blanks. You'll need 1,000. Get plenty. They help to advertise the event and paper is cheap. Cost about \$5.00. Nice size is 3½ by 5½. Information you want from the entrant is: name, club affiliation, handicap and address and a blank to mark amount paid. Information you'll want to give entrant is the day and date of the event, schedule and entry fee expected.

(4) Posters and advertising matter. A nice card (10 x 13) for club bulletin boards can be secured for \$15. You'll be able to use 500. Send at least four to every club in your district, one for men's locker-room, women's locker-room, pro-shop and grill. Club members in business can also use them in their windows. (5) Admission tickets. Print up 2,000, to be sure to have enough. Tags on lapel-strings are best. Maybe \$20.00.

Where's your money coming from to

pay these bills and the purse? That's best explained by the following balance sheet:

#### Probable Revenue:

|                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Sponsor .....      | \$1,075.00        |
| Entry fees .....   | 860.00            |
| Gallery fees ..... | 500.00            |
| <b>Total .....</b> | <b>\$2,435.00</b> |

#### Probable Expenses:

|                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Cash prizes (pro) .....        | \$1,000.00        |
| Trophies (amateur) .....       | 150.00            |
| Insurance .....                | 75.00             |
| Expenses (general) .....       | 70.00             |
| To pay back sponsor .....      | 1,075.00          |
| Tax on admission tickets ..... | 50.00             |
| <b>Total .....</b>             | <b>\$2,420.00</b> |

#### Here's a breakdown of probable revenue:

|                                  |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Entry fees                       |          |
| 60 professionals at \$5.00 ..... | \$300.00 |
| 100 amateurs at \$5.00 .....     | 500.00   |
| 60 women (first day) .....       | 60.00    |
|                                  | <hr/>    |
|                                  | \$860.00 |
| Gallery fees                     |          |
| Thursday, 150 at 50c .....       | 75.00    |
| Friday, 150 at 50c .....         | 75.00    |
| Saturday, 200 at 50c .....       | 100.00   |
| Sunday, 250 at \$1.00 .....      | 250.00   |
|                                  | <hr/>    |
|                                  | \$500.00 |

You'll notice we've made \$15.00 on paper, but don't let that worry you. There are lots of changes to any advance balance sheet. Maybe that 50c gate on the first three days could be boosted to a buck in your section. Certainly the show is worth it. That would materially change your revenue. Maybe the club feels that \$5 for the amateur entry is too stiff. Cut it to \$3.00 and get more of them! You'll find many golfers who, unable to play in the event, will pay their entry fee to help the event along. After all it would cost them \$2.50 to see the event anyway!

#### Ticket Selling a Tough Job

Handling that ticket-selling job at the front gate and in the gallery is a good job for the women of the club. They're good at it and it will be their part in the tournament. If you're operating in a golf-minded town and have plenty of help, season tickets are a good deal. They can sell for \$1.65 (\$1.50 plus tax) and a great many can be sold in advance. In fact, we know of one tournament which was under-

written by the sale of advance tickets alone. Every ticket purchaser became a booster for the event and it worked. After all there is plenty of room on a golf course. No danger of over-crowding, so pack 'em in.

These \$1,000 opens are not auspicious affairs. They seldom attract nationally known golf stars except those in your own district, but they are splendid things for this game called golf. They give the amateur and professional golfer the competition he needs to keep his game in shape. They educate the public to what kind of a show they can expect at a golf tournament and may help make it easier for the promotion of a bigger event some other day. They give the golf club lots of good publicity. If you have just one nationally-known star in your entry, the story goes out over all the wire services under your town's date line (tab for the Chamber of Commerce).

Perhaps the most important thing—this gives the golf club members a real project to work on. Working on various committees, thinking and talking nothing but this one big project for weeks and weeks will do more to keep your membership happy than any one other stunt you can pull. Try it out! Make your plans now and when the summer season opens you'll be ready to go.

## Weekly Pro-Amateur Is Popular in Indiana

PRO-AMATEUR play which was very popular in the northern Indiana district was that which consisted of a pro and three amateurs from the pro's own club, playing 18 holes, and scoring the "low ball" gross score. While in most instances the individual pro and any one of his three amateurs would shoot scores averaging between 70 and 100, the low ball score was often 8 or 10 under par.

These low best ball scores reflect the benefits of this type of play; players are not required to play under the strain of 18-hole pressure, but are permitted to cast aside all caution and go for birdies and eagles on every hole! For the amateur, this relief from the fear of blowing is like manna from heaven, and is largely responsible for making the tournaments so popular. The tournaments were so popular that one was held in northern Indiana

every Monday of the playing season, and enlisted regular play from 80 per cent of all available professionals in the region!

This popularity was not based upon sheer pleasure of playing, either. Among those advantages which the amateurs received was the opportunity of playing in regular competition with the professional, who was a part of his team and who could coach and encourage him during the play.

Pros' relations with amateurs were greatly improved and extended inasmuch as this type of competition brought into pleasant, relaxed playing association with the pro, many high-handicap players. Many of these players formerly had been shy about playing with pros, hence did not have any degree of personal interest in the pro's progress at his club.

The amateur was given an opportunity to learn to go for birdies and eagles. From a psychological standpoint, every aspiring competitive player must develop this ability to constantly strive to lower par rather than to try to "hang on." And by no means does one team dominate the play. Of course, the percentage is with the best team, but out of approximately 20 matches during the season, no team won more than four firsts, and no team failed to win at least one first place.

And winning first place is well worth while, as the first place pot is seldom less than \$50 per team; the pro taking one-fourth in cash, and the amateurs taking one-fourth each in merchandise. Then there is generally \$15 to \$20 in the am-am pot, and the same amount in the low pro cash pot. And all for the sum of \$2.50 with greens fees waived by the home club. The events are held on the best courses in the region.

The host pro is given an opportunity to reap his percentage on the merchandise which the amateurs receive. If the team fails to take first, there is always second, third and even fourth place money, when the field is large enough to justify it.

**Philly District Reelects Officers**—Frank Hardt, sec. of the USGA, was reelected president of the Golf Assn. of Philadelphia, for his third term, at the organization's 45th annual meeting. Stanley A. Wesh, Philadelphia Cricket Club, was reelected v. p., and Frank H. Chapman, long the association's sec.-treas., was reelected.

After two years at medal play the association decided to make its 1941 amateur championship at medal play.