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PUSHING PUBLIC PLAY

By GLENN MORRIS

A golf boom is on at public and daily fee courses!

A tested and successful low-price club rental plan is speeding the boom in several cities. It's a plan originated at Cincinnati's public courses by "Red" Strauss, the city's muny golf supervisor, and Tam Deering, Cincinnati director of recreation.

Glenn Morris, Managing Director of the National Golf Foundation, tells here the high spots of this plan which overcomes the primary expense handicap of golf for the masses, and vastly expands the market for golf equipment.—Editor.

NON-PRODUCTIVE time is the big problem of the fee course owner. It's the fee course owner's version of the private course problem of having to pay heavy fixed charges before a ball is hit off the first tee.

In planning with fee course owners to convert this non-productive time into revenue, several facts are continuously impressed on us.

Course owners agree that persistent, planned and comprehensive promotion is essential to development of fee course business profits and security.

They agree that ably managed public courses can be, and frequently are, the fee courses' greatest promotional asset instead of a sharply competitive factor not having to bear a tax load.

They further agree that the well-managed fee course with its prices almost invariably higher than the muny course rates, automatically gets the play of those who find the public courses with too heavy traffic.

Therefore, the more play the public

courses get, the better is the chance of the fee courses to get an overflow that can be distributed in the present unsold time on fee courses. The next step, of course, is the increase in private course membership as a result of the fee course play becoming too heavy for those who want more privacy and elbow room when they play.

Consequently the whole financial structure of the golf business is based on bringing new players in at the public courses, and on the coordination of promotion activities.

Bowling has had a tremendous increase in popularity of two factors in addition to the fundamental attraction of the game. These two factors are:

(1) Heavier investment of the plant owners which demands that they become



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and stay active in business promotion.

(2) The players not having to invest in playing equipment.

Golf is becoming fully aware of the necessity of applying this No. 1 factor, promotion, also because the owners of fee courses and the member co-owners of private courses recognize the substantial figure of their investment in plant.

According to the National Golf Foundation's investigation and findings the low-price club rental plan at public and fee courses is overcoming the handicap of rather substantial playing equipment investment required of the beginner. Next to the vast growth of golf in high schools and colleges during the past few years this low-price club rental plan is the most significant development in golf promotion. And it's probably more effective than the school promotion as an immediate developer of revenue golf business inasmuch as the course fees and the investment of players in their own equipment, after sampling golf on rented equipment, has brought many thousands of dollars into the golf business.

Primary instruction, too, is an essential item in successful golf promotion.

'Sampling' Pays Dividends

The Foundation does not advocate giving too much instruction free, but it is convinced that the golf business as a whole and the pros as individuals, benefit greatly from "sampling" just as the gum, cigarette and other product manufacturers have built gigantic demand by sampling.

The Foundation's experience shows the golf business picture with these highlights:

1. People play primarily for fun.
2. People must discover, or get sold on, the fun and health and recreation benefits of the game if they are to become golf patrons—in short, there must be introductions to golf.
3. Obviously, the more golfers, the better all phases of the golf business and the lower per player cost of golf.
4. The more enjoyment the player derives from his participation in the game the more he wants to play—and does. His enthusiasm and the time he devotes to the game usually is measured by his ability to make decent shots.

5. A large percentage of beginners, if left to their own resources, become discouraged and are lost to the game. Ignoring these would-be golfers, failing to help them when they are struggling to learn what the game is all about, how to grip

and swing a club, etc., is ignoring an important profit factor of the golf business.

6. Can we expect the average individual, who has never played golf and who cannot possibly know about the fun of playing and the thrill that comes from a well-hit ball, to have any desire to go to a golf shop and lay real coin of the realm, dollars mind you, on the line for a set of clubs, a bag, balls, etc.? And then to top it off, drive—miles maybe—to a golf course to pay a green-fee. To do what—publicly (he thinks) make an ass of himself!

Promotions Attract Beginners

7. Let's suppose the same individual mentioned above reads in his newspaper or hears on his radio that free group instruction classes are a regular weekly feature at a local public or fee course. Or that he (or she) can join a class for as little as 25 cents per lesson. He learns that to play and find out if he really wants to take up the game, he doesn't have to buy an expensive set of clubs, bag and whatnot—can rent a good five-club set, a bag and three balls for 15 cents per day; can, with no deposit and no red tape, rent his complete playing equipment for no more than the price of a package of cigarettes. Won't this kind of promotion get him over that first hurdle that's made up of lots of dollars and complete ignorance of the game?

We won't have to answer this question. The City of Cincinnati and dozens of other cities have already provided us with the answer—a most emphatic "Yes."

8. The better the patrons of your course can score the more rounds of play your course can take. The inept clog up the course, provide bottle-necks to profits. The more your players know about handling clubs, the more they know about the rules and etiquette of the game, the speedier becomes the play. Your patrons enjoy your facilities more—consequently, play your course oftener and boost it to their friends. Providing your customers therefore with playing tips and understandable authoritative literature on whys and wherefores of golf rules, etiquette, etc., makes productive time out of non-productive time—speeds up play and profits.

9. A competent professional instructor, constantly alert and on the job to pass out free playing tips on the game's fundamentals, to handle regularly scheduled classes for men and women, boys and girls, can do more to step up play on daily-fee courses than any other factor. In our opin-

ion he is worth his weight in gold to the course owner—especially, if such free professional teaching services are properly publicized by advertising. And, if your professional staff is anyway dependent upon private lesson income, it will be found that proper dispensation of free elementary “tips,” and watching and nursing beginners as well as others in difficulty, will get more lesson bookings than any other method.

The National Golf Foundation recently published a treatise entitled “Renting Golf Club Sets to Increase Play,” a copy of which will be sent free upon request to interested fee course owners or operators. This treatise gives details of the City of

Cincinnati's method of handling club rentals and other valuable information about this club lending library plan as successfully used in many other large cities.

Course owners and professionals interested in doing a thorough-going promotional job by passing out free instruction literature will do well to take advantage of the Foundation's share-the-cost offer on supplying its recently published textbook for beginners and golf class students, “Golf Fundamentals.” Copy of this attractive 16-page book, lithographed in two colors, with full particulars, also sent free upon request to professionals or course operators; address National Golf Foundation, 14 E. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

Southwest's Open Handling Presages More Major Tourneys for Section

By HERB GRAFFIS

AS a result of the manner in which the 1941 National Open was handled at the Colonial Club at Fort Worth, it's certain that the USGA will favorably consider other national championship bids from ace clubs in this section of the nation.

There's been a question about the advisability of awarding National Open championships to the southwest because of the comparatively small USGA membership in this part of the U. S. However recognition of the southwest with an Open is expected to increase the association's roster in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas and adjacent states.

Although Fort Worth probably was kept from record attendance in dollar volume by heavy rains preceding the tournament and on the second day of the competition, it's also believed that a possible over-emphasis of expectations of record galleries kept away many who wanted to see the southwest's first National Open but were afraid to buck the tremendous crowds forecast for the event.

However, the Colonial gate, in numbers came near to the record established at

Minikahda in 1930—the Jones Open finale. Minikahda's prices were higher.

The Colonial gate was approximately:
Season tickets—4,000 at \$6 net.....\$24,000

Daily Tickets:	
Thursday—929 at \$2 net.....	1,858
Friday—957 at \$2 net	1,914
Saturday—1,643 at \$3 net.....	4,929
	\$32,701

Colonial members and their families were admitted free. This accounted for approximately an additional 700 admissions. A precise count including newspapermen, police, marshals, messengers and others on passes would be less than 8,500. Compare that figure with some newspaper estimates of the final day's crowd. The newspaper count on a golf championship crowd is anywhere from 50 to 150 per cent higher than the actual count. GOLF-DOM's editor, although able to figure out by simple mathematics how many people can crowd three deep around a 72d hole where most of the gallery eventually gathers, lies the same as the other boys in making his newspaper estimate. Why shatter a fine old tradition?

Greenkeeper R. M. Alexander, Jr., Man-