

What About Golf And Defense?

Labor has been chief difficulty till now,
but threatened petroleum rationing in East
will curtail fall play and winter programs

NEW YORK Metropolitan district golf clubs, private and public, are thinking about the effect of petroleum products rationing. Some clubs are increasing their fuel oil storage capacity with winter activities in prospect. Others without adequate storage will have to deny use of the clubhouse even if weather and winter sports popularity might warrant house operation in the cold months.

If gasolineless Sundays come in again a reduction in late season play is inevitable. This summer play has been up especially at daily fee and municipal courses. The increase is accounted for by weekday play in most pay-play courses. Play in early morning and late afternoon has been increased by factory work shifts.

Course equipment machinery buying has been strong this season. Several clubs have bought and stored machinery in their barns, using present equipment until parts can't be obtained quick enough to warrant repairs.

Course alteration to allow more machine maintenance has been fairly extensive in the N. Y. Met. district. It's believed that considerable of this sort of work will be done in late fall and winter to keep greensmen in the off months. It's been hard enough to keep men at course work against defense job attraction without taking a chance on the men who have been kept not returning to the club after a winter absence.

Secondary maintenance items have received usual attention at comparatively few clubs this season. Care of landscape features, shrub beds, tree pruning and spraying, trimming in woods, paper and litter pick-up, and parking spaces have been neglected.

Earlier play at courses has tied up greens mowing. It has been difficult to get the newer course workmen to start early enough to keep ahead of players. Men complain about starting at 7 A. M., and when asked to start at 5 or 6 A. M., some newer men quit their jobs.

One course, normally employing 13

men, most of whom have been at the course for years, now is maintained by a crew of 10 men, only one of whom has been on the course prior to this year. That course is in an industrial area in New Jersey. It had to increase greensmen's wages from 50 cents to 60 cents an hour, but couldn't keep men with the increase.

Some courses are using high school students for course work. Men formerly on WPA who are too old for factory hire comprise majority of course crews at several clubs. Greenkeepers report that these ex-WPA men who are former white-collar workers and well educated make good men on a course after they get toughened to steady outdoor work.

At one New Jersey course greensmen work in part time shifts after their work in industrial plants.

Golfers generally make allowances for what the greenkeeper is up against. Most realize that with new men greens will not be mowed as true as experienced men do the job, traps will not be raked as thoroughly, customary courtesies during playing of shots will be overlooked, mowing work will get behind schedule, greens that in past years were night-watered now will be watered during the early morning and day, turf will be damaged due to burning and disease and insect attacks that get out of control.

Many golfers are having trouble with inexperienced and insufficient labor in their own businesses, hence appreciate the greenkeeper's problems.

One noticeable feature of play at the public and daily fee courses is that former caddies in the 18-25 age brackets now are spending part of their defense plant wages for golf playing privileges.

After jerky growth periods in spring, cold and warm stretches alternating, a rainy June and dampness well into the first three weeks of July, there followed a hot, dry spell. Shallow-rooted turf wilted. *Poa annua* went out, and there was a lot of it to go.