

# Richmond Cuts Costs—Saves Club

By RAY HAYWOOD

A PLAN whereby the "average man", financially speaking, can have the advantages of a private club at the costs of a municipal course is working at the Richmond (Calif.) GC. Under the leadership of Pat Markovich, head professional, the Richmond club has passed the theoretical stage and actually has its plan operating—with good results.

Dues are so gauged that they compete with or are lower than the municipal courses in the metropolitan Oakland-San Francisco area. They are much lower than the level of the private clubs.

Markovich and his alert board of directors are proceeding on the assumption that by keeping costs down, they can bring the average man into the game—and keep him in it. Richmond, always an industrial city, and now the home of two huge war-time shipyards, is an ideal place for the experiment. Its progress is being watched closely by clubs located in similar communities on the Pacific Coast.

Everybody in Richmond is working, but mostly for moderate salaries. All have money, but few have sufficient to finance all their hobbies and sports. The club has always realized the game was neglected periodically for hunting, fishing, bowling, etc. Most of these other sports are seasonal, while golf in Richmond, like in all other California cities is an all year 'round activity.

## Hunting Hurts Golf Play

Golf, however, suffered when the club member had an urge for a hunting or fishing trip—and the Bay area is a hunter's paradise. In order to hold these less avid golfers, Markovich realized that he had to devise a membership assessment which would hold members over long periods, but yet not require a constant and relatively heavy expense as is the case under the typical private club set-up.

By cutting expenses to the bone and with future welfare, increased membership and a gradual climbing revenue in mind, the club set the yearly dues total at \$66.60—including taxes. This sum does not include a \$10 initiation fee, which the member owns and may sell if he should resign.

This brings the total monthly cost to \$5.55—a figure which meets competing municipal course costs and is far under the private club and most of the semi-private club costs in the area. Private club dues in the Bay region range from \$11 to \$20 per month not including taxes. In itself, this is not expensive as golf courses go, but it still is a little rich for the blood of our "average man."

Operating with a membership of 300, Markovich figures that the revenue going to the club will be more than enough to keep the 18-hole course in perfect shape and complete his many improvement projects. The membership rolls will be closed when the 300-mark is reached.

The club is growing solidly because it offers the social life and accommodations of a private club but at the same time does not have the weekend and holiday traffic jams which make municipal course golfers threaten to quit when it takes from four to five hours to play 18 holes. At the same time, Richmond's plan does not harm the three municipal courses in the East Bay.

But the fact still remains that many of the many players are novices, who are soon discouraged by the long waits between shots, and delays in securing starting times. Richmond's plan has eliminated many of these unpleasant factors and at no additional cost. It has made it possible for many converts to continue in the game, and has captured for golf the full sporting interests of many beginners.

## There's a Wind Problem

The new dues schedule is eliminating the problem caused by Richmond's summer trade winds. In keeping with Eastern opinion, these winds are not soft Pacific zephyrs. They are strong and gusty, and play havoc with golf shots, especially the sliced variety, for the three summer months. In fact, Richmond is known to its more jocular members as the "St. Andrews of the West." In the past, Markovich found that club membership would be built up during the winter—the course drains rapidly—but would drop just as fast when the wind began.

To eliminate both the loss of regular

*Golfdom*

members who could not afford to pay club dues when not playing, and those lured by other activities, Markovich designed a 9-month membership plan. It offers membership for 3-month periods at \$21 per period. However, the golfer must join for 3 of these units—9 months. The total cost this way is \$63. The initiation fee is omitted.

The temporary member may drop out when the wind begins to howl and come back again when summer ends.

Since the new professional took charge, grass tees have been installed on all holes. Much of the turf came from Treasure Island, site of the Golden Gate Exposition on San Francisco. Markovich bought the turf when the fair buildings and landscaping were removed to clear the grounds for a naval air station.

Hundreds of trees, mostly of the fast growing varieties suitable for wind breaks, have been planted and the board of directors has planned a new pro-shop and an additional wing for the exclusive use of women members and their organizations.

Before the club could put its plan in operation it had to kill its "depression hangover," a \$61,000 debt. It did this by a complete and final re-financing. The \$61,000 was liquidated at 10 cents on the dollar. With this done, ten members were found—and it was not difficult—who were willing to put up \$1000 each. With this \$10,000, the club went to work in earnest to provide its members with an organization and facilities entirely adequate to fill all phases of a golfer's wants.

So successful was the re-financing, sufficient money was found to build a new men's locker-room. The old locker-room was turned into a beautiful lounge and a bar built that now serves both the lounge and the main dining room.

These improvements, coupled with the sweat dripped by the greensmen on the fairways, tees and greens have improved the Richmond course 50% over its condition when Markovich became professional less than three years ago.

Basing his estimate upon 1940-41 operations, Markovich figures the club can operate nicely on a yearly budget of \$19,404. This covers payments on the new \$4,500 pump recently installed. The club has fairway watering. Like the other improvements, the pump was made possible by the refinancing.

A brief breakdown of the re-financing plan reveals that \$6,000 of the \$10,000 was used to retire the debt; \$4,000 went into the improvements. The club is paying off

these notes, starting at \$100 per month plus interest. Credit for \$500 dues has been given each man who entered the deal. Signers have a 10-year club contract.

All income above the budget is considered profit and is split among the signers. The ten signers are organized as an advisory board which considers club matters with the regular board of directors.

The club was formed in 1924 under the name Carquinez Golf Club. From that time up to 1930, it had cottonseed greens. Then the members, tired of digging their

## Richmond Golfers:



## Are You Taking Advantage Of Daylight Saving Time?

**Week Day Cards**  
**\$3 Per Month**  
(There are at least 10 week days in each month) A real savings!

**Regular Membership**  
**\$5 Per Month**  
plus tax. (This entitles you to play every day in the week.)

**REGULAR GREEN FEES**  
WEEK DAYS 30—75c  
SATURDAY, SUNDAY, HOLIDAYS 75—85c  
Time determines the change in price

If you golfers aren't taking advantage of Daylight Saving Time, you're overlooking a real bet. It's now light till 7:30 p. m.—there's plenty of time in which to play eighteen holes. Our special rates mean real savings for you. Our week-day cards—costing only \$3 per month—make the average cost of playing only 15c per day! Start tomorrow—take advantage of this offer!

## OUR PRO SHOP

Has for sale several hundred used golf clubs; as well as complete sets of used clubs. We have a big supply of golf balls on hand. Also available are ten sets of new, standard-make irons and thirteen sets of new standard woods.

**OUR CLUBHOUSE IS AVAILABLE FOR PARTIES & DANCES. REASONABLE RATES.**

## Richmond Golf Club

LOCATION: 4 miles north of Richmond on Giant Road or Road 20.

One of the recent newspaper ads Richmond used to keep the townsfolk golf conscious.

balls from the greens during wet weather and having them bounce out of bounds from the hardened cottonseed during the summer, decided to have bent greens.

A well was drilled, and through 1931, the greens and fairways were planted. The club re-opened in 1932 with a plan whereby all debts would be paid off in six years—then came the depression. In 1933, the club reached the depths. With only 88 regular members, and greatly reduced green fees, it tottered on the brink of failing. Only a slight increase in industrial payrolls kept it going. Things continued in much the same precarious manner until three years ago when Markovich's predecessor died.

Markovich, then assistant professional at the San Francisco GC, was contacted and told he would have leeway to try his ideas if he would take a chance at Richmond. Pat took the chance, and a golf course was kept from turning into a weed patch.