

What Is The Ball Outlook?

By HERB GRAFFIS

Pros' responsibility is to keep balls in play, and distributed as evenly as possible, to prevent some clubs getting into a serious situation, to say the least.

GOLF is awakening to the urgent importance of a job it'll have to handle wisely if it's going to keep going.

The job is that of rationing the comparatively few new golf balls that are on the market and the fairly large stocks of reconditioned balls. How many of the reconditioned balls there will be is almost anybody's guess. Estimates made by experienced men in the business range from 2,000,000 dozen to 5,000,000 dozen. The driving ranges have supplied a market for used balls during the past several years and have collected a surplus stock that, properly reconditioned, should supply balls well into the 1944 season.

In view of the probability at least of a two year stock of balls, new and reconditioned, being available under normal demand and distribution the hoarder should have a long wait before he gets an edge over those who buy for current use. But the hoarder, like any other breed of hog, doesn't figure things that way. He wants to get everything he can right now even if he outsmarts himself in his avarice.

The threatening aspect of the situation in golf is that the hogs are stampeding fellows who habitually buy only the balls they need for immediate use. Especially since the reconditioning ball business has come to the front are men and women getting the idea they should have their supply of old golf balls renewed and keep this reconditioned supply under lock and key. That is beginning to take golf balls out of play.

Educate to Stop Hoarding

Unless an educational campaign to stop hoarding is started and public acceptance secured for a sane and easy rationing program golf's one hope is the now fairly remote one of getting a satisfactory synthetic ball. Synthetic materials are coming under priorities rather extensively so even the synthetic ball prospects may be a mirage.

Government action to halt golf ball

hoarding is out of the question. In the face of the necessity for attending to essential matters any government official will figure that if golfers are such boobs they can't cooperate among themselves to spread out the ball supply, they don't deserve consideration. Hence the golf associations, amateur and pro, and club officials must act quickly in a situation that is developing critically.

With the ball supply getting compacted into fewer hands it is logical that clubs will have a slump in play, and that potential new players will have no interest in taking up a game they won't be able to play without paying a heavy premium for balls. This condition, rushed to its eventual development by unrestricted hoarding of golf balls, will mean that courses will be taken out of play because of lack of patronage. Then the golf ball hoarders will be left holding a stock for which there's no market. Everybody will lose.

Don't Think Too Wishfully

This prospect may seem to be unduly dark but if the American has learned anything since Dec. 7, 1941, he should have learned not to kid himself that things will work out pleasantly without his individual effort and thought.

Pros are beginning to see signs of concentration of golf ball stocks and are having their troubles in endeavoring to put into operation rationing plans that will spread out the supply of new and reconditioned balls. And one of the sorriest aspects of the situation is that stores, which do not have any special regard for the preservation of the game, generally allow sales of reconditioned balls on basis per customer far beyond the customer's normal requirements.

One of the foremost makers and reconditioners of golf balls comments:

"Right now in the program of gathering old golf balls, the question is commonly being raised as to just how many new

balls an individual player or a golf pro will get back in return for the number of old golf balls the individual player—or the golf pro—turns in to the manufacturer.

"If the golf professional takes the position that he will return to his member a new ball for every old ball the member turns in, and he continues that policy throughout, it is obvious that the following condition could easily be created: A few members who happen to have a fairly sizable quantity of old golf balls would turn them in and in return would receive an equally good supply of new balls as the new balls were made available. Other members who are not so fortunate as to have any supply of old golf balls would have none to turn in and would, therefore, be unable to obtain any new balls. It would seem logical that these members in this class would, therefore, not be able to play golf; would lose interest in the club and, in all probability, would resign.

"Consequently, it would seem that the golf professional has a real obligation to all of the members of his club and to the officers of the club who are his employers to see to it that a condition such as just described does not arise.

"If this is the case, then the golf pro should not, under any circumstance, make commitments to individual members as to exactly how many new balls will be made available to the member who turns in some specific quantity of old balls.

Should Explain to Members

"It would seem that the golf professional should make the situation clear to each member in reply to questions that will be presented to him by these members. It seems equally obvious that if this situation is described carefully by the pro, to the members, that they will see the soundness of it and in their own interest will be only too glad to have the pro allocate the supply of new balls that he is able to obtain as evenly as possible to the entire membership so that the entire playing membership can be kept

in a position to play and in that way salvage the club and keep it alive.

"These thoughts are brought forcibly to my mind because I am having reported to me from so many quarters the insistence on the part of golf professionals to know just how many golf balls they are going to get back in return for old balls they turn in and because the golf professionals report that they are making commitments to their members that they will give the member certain specified quantities in return for the old balls the member turns in.

"It seems to me that the situation is so grave and is so far-reaching that it is absolutely necessary that every individual connected with it do his share. I feel confident that if every individual does do his share, a sufficient quantity of golf balls can be made available, not only for this year, but for 1943, to practically insure the maintenance of golf play and, along with it, to maintain the private clubs in existence. If this is not done, it would seem to me that it would be entirely possible for the lives of a number of private clubs to be placed in serious jeopardy."

Joseph G. Davis, Oldest Golf Writer, Dies

JOSEPH GARIBALDI DAVIS, 79, for the past 16 years executive sec. of the Chicago District GA, died April 3 in a Chicago hospital, after a 7-weeks' illness. For 25 years Joe was golf editor of the Chicago Tribune. He was born in England. He resided in Florida for a short time after coming to the U. S. and moved to Chicago in the 80s.

He was among the first to play golf in the Chicago District and did much to build the game in the midwest. He was probably the first sports writer in the U. S. regularly assigned to golf. Thousands knew Joe and loved him. He was a real gentleman sportsman. His amazing memory and extensive acquaintance accounted for keeping the history of mid-western golf complete and accurate.

Elmhurst (Ill.) CC began something other clubs are adopting. Elmhurst called one of its traps the USO trap. Every player who hits a shot into that trap deposits a quarter in a box in the clubhouse. The collection is forwarded to the USO.

A sign located not to interfere with play marks the trap.

Such a trap, with a dime or quarter penalty, might well be designated at every golf club in the United States and bring in a goodly piece of money for USO operations.