

OCTOBER, 1942

What of Golf in 1943?

Here Is a Round-up of Opinion From Regional Golf Association Officials Based on Experiences of 1942

By **HERB GRAFFIS**

OFFICIALS of regional golf associations have collaborated with **GOLFDOM** in taking a cold-eyed look at the facts of life in U. S. golf this first season of global war.

Experience this year, during which eastern clubs got a preview of the effect gasoline rationing probably will have nationally, gives basis for the belief that at least 1,500 of the 5,209 golf clubs that operated in the spring of 1942 won't be played on in 1943.

Of the nation's golf clubs at the start of 1942 there were 2,007 that had one or more 18-hole courses. There were 3,202 9-hole clubs. These clubs were classified as 3,288 private clubs; 1,210 daily-fee courses, and 711 public courses.

Basing our estimates mainly on the maps, we don't see much chance for about 500 of the 18-hole clubs and 1,000 of the 9-hole clubs to operate in 1943. The public courses probably won't lose more than 30, and those in the far-out districts of large cities or in state park areas.

But you can make a guess better or worse than ours, and nobody can argue with you for it all chiefly depends on how the war goes.

The preceding estimates were based on what the evidence has indicated about:

(a) how far players will go to play golf; (b) to what extent they'll share autos or use other transportation; (c) what effect caddie supply has at private clubs; (d) appeal of clubs minus the service to which members have been accustomed; (e) effect of increased taxes.

One thing stands out plainly in this year's golf and that is the difficulty of many members getting accustomed to lowered service standards and higher prices at private clubs. The members expected miracles that didn't happen. Hotel and city club managers marveled at the standards the golf club men were able to maintain but members complained. They'll get over that.

It is quite logical to expect that the clubs surviving in 1943 will get heavier play than normal, barring exceedingly adverse war conditions. Toward the latter part of this season there were signs that the executive and professional men classes of amateur golfer were beginning to recognize golf as physical- and mental-conditioning recreation having a high value in balancing the strain of wartime work.

Greater income for wage-earners was reflected in public course play and in fee-course play at closer-in courses. Rainy weather was a retarding element. Never-

theless preliminary estimates for the 1942 golf season points to public and fee course play being about 5% greater than last year, an increase of about 1,500,000 rounds. Private club play was off about 10% from 1941, or approximately 2,000,000 rounds, according to available data. Entire play for the year probably slid a million rounds off the 1941 total. Where the sharp reduction in play at many private clubs occurred was in women's golf. The women have gone in for war work as intensely as they went in for golf.

GOLFDOM queried officials of district golf associations on:

(1) To what extent has golf play increased or decreased at private and public courses in your territory this year?

(2) What has stood out in the season's experience as showing the most valuable phase of golf's present and potential service to the nation at war?

(3) What do you think the prospects are for golf clubs in 1943?

(4) What revisions in course maintenance and clubhouse operation seem to you to be advisable in further adjustment to war-time conditions?

(5) What mistakes do you think have been made by golf thus far in war-time operation?

(6) What effects have gasoline and rubber rationing had on clubs in your district?

Digests of representative replies follow:

F. H. Chapman, secy., GA of Philadelphia:

(1) Saturdays and Sundays have brought their best patronage. Clubs which depend mostly on those who drive their own cars have noted a decrease in patronage due to gasoline and tire restrictions; but where our clubs are located at points readily accessible to train, trolley and bus transportation, they have been well patronized.

(2) The three national tournaments for the benefit of the Red Cross, held mostly on Decoration Day, Fourth of July and Labor Day, found ready response among member clubs of this Association. Practically every club staged at least one tournament—about fifteen of them held three tournaments. A further activity has been the arrangements made by our clubs, among many others throughout the country, to provide playing facilities for the men in the services.

(3) I cannot offer any opinion.

(4) Many clubs have closed their

courses on Mondays. The caddie situation has been bad, and there seems to be little prospect of any change for the better. Most caddies have deserted the clubs for defense jobs or the services.

(5) I dare say there have been many mistakes made by our clubs. The errors will doubtless be shown up from time to time in the future.

(6) The answer I made to your first query would apply to this one. Rationing of gasoline and tires has hit our clubs and hit them hard, especially those more inaccessible to other means of transportation.

Chas F. Gould, secy., Buffalo Distr. GA:

(1) Golf has held its own on private courses and definitely increased on public courses until about the middle of September, which is the usual seasonal experience.

(2) The most valuable phase of golf's potential service to the nation at war would seem to be the mental and physical relaxation provided to so many busy people who have sought relaxation in the game as a matter of sound health. Those not interested in golf could hardly be expected to go along, but that is understandable.

(3) The prospects for golf clubs in 1943 are in many respects questionable. On those courses which are near public transportation and near the city, recreational play should be good; not good at courses which are hard to reach.

(4) Certainly clubhouse operations should be cut to a minimum, grill room with limited eating facilities, shower room, and locker room. Wherever practicable, the greens should be kept up in excellent condition, and winter rules used on the fairways to reduce maintenance. Serious lost ball hazards should be eliminated if possible.

(5) Generally speaking, I think those in charge of golf so far during wartime operations have made very few major mistakes except their failure to realize and capitalize on the possibilities of fund raising as a larger contribution of golf. This applies to men in individual clubs. In many instances, there has been little or no interest in raising money by golfers in justification of their recreation, though in some places a great deal of good has been done.

(6) Gasoline and rubber rationing has had the expected effect on those outlying clubs in our District which require sub-

stantial use of gasoline and rubber. I believe by next spring some of those can be overcome by proper planning after appointment of transportation committees. I feel that all golfers who can do so will continue to get helpful relaxation from the game without necessarily feeling that they are slackers in the war effort. I do not approve of formal championship or invitation tournaments for the duration.

●
Raynor M. Gardiner, sec.-treas., New England GA:

(1) Decrease in play has been in direct proportion to its accessibility. I should say that some private courses have decreased 50%, public courses not so much.

(2) General relaxation for tired overstrained people and healthy exercise.

(3) Bad. There will be enough balls and I think general play will continue to decrease but at a lesser rate.

(4) Most clubs would be well advised to reduce their course to nine holes and if possible close or partially close their clubhouses for the winter. Fairways should be narrowed and many traps abandoned.

(5) Tournaments such as the Hale America do not make a good impression and should be discontinued. Small local events should be encouraged.

(6) Outlying clubs will have less and less play, as people cannot use a small amount of gasoline to play golf.

●
Hollis Hill, sec., Public Golf Assn. of Minnesota:

I am afraid any comments I make will carry very little weight, as the situation in golf at present seems to be an individual problem with each club and what has hurt some clubs has helped others to some extent. The ten member clubs in the Twin Cities with which I am in closer contact than our other members, have some experiences in common which I will set down in the order listed in your letter.

(1) Golf play has fallen off this season and from what I can learn the private courses have been affected more than the average public course. I would not care to make an estimate of the amount of decrease but unquestionably it has been quite large in some clubs.

(3) Our Association lost four member clubs this season due to closing the courses. These were four of the smaller and not easily accessible clubs. The rest of our members carried through a full season's program even though all clubs lost a

large number of players by reason of the war. We hope to carry on a program next year if conditions are such that it is at all possible to do so. It will undoubtedly have to be curtailed somewhat. To the best of my knowledge, no other public courses in our association contemplate closing next year.

(6) Gasoline rationing has not started in the Twin Cities area as yet, so have nothing to go on except a guess. I think this is where the outlying clubs are going to feel the pinch the most, depending on how drastic the gas rationing is. The clubs that are served by street car or close to residential sections may even profit by it to some extent. In general however, it is almost certain that it will cut down the play a great deal.

On your question number two I probably should have mentioned that practically every course has opened its facilities to the men in the service either by giving them free play or in some cases special rates.

●
E. F. Adelberger, Dayton, O., Tour. Chmn., Miami Valley DGA:

I do not see that the Miami Valley GC's play has decreased from a membership standpoint, but the hours of play have changed considerably. Most of our play is after 4 o'clock and over the weekends. Over that period, our play has been quite heavy and I think it is due to the fact that members are being pressed so hard during the daytime, that they are hunting some type of relaxation in order to "build up" for the next day.

The biggest problem for the continuance of clubs for 1943 is the help problem, both from the service standpoint to the clubhouse and the maintenance upkeep on the golf course. We have solved our problem this year with members' sons, in training for football, who operated our mowers for both greens and fairways. The clubhouse has been another problem; continuous turnover. Whether we can continue our '43 operations as we have in '42 is a question I cannot answer. We have tried to cut down the maintenance of our golf course by narrowing the fairways which means less cutting and, on the other hand, keeping the roughs short which meant less hunting for golf balls, and at the same time, ball conservation.

As far as making mistakes, we have made plenty, but they have been due to the necessity and due to the time; rather than call them mistakes I would say we

are operating under an emergency and our members have been more than fair by absorbing these things with practically no criticism.

There has been quite a little switching of memberships from one club to another, forecasting gasoline rationing, and trying to make affiliations as close as possible to homes. All clubs have "crony foursomes" and there has been quite a bit of discussion of the "share the ride" for their weekend foursomes. We have noted considerable increase in our clubhouse activities, such as the dining room, grill, and the bar, which I believe, is due to the fact that our members have been giving the present situation serious thought and have been spending more time at the club, rather than make several trips during the day.

I feel that clubs will continue in 1943 on some basis which I think we will have to take care of when spring comes, rather than forecast at the present time, because the members will have the equipment but the problem will be transportation mainly. I don't think that is as serious in the smaller areas as it is going to be in the Metropolitan areas.

We are contemplating a larger winter social activity than ever before in the history of our club, due to the fact our membership will be kept at home and will need this recreation.

I see no reason why this should not be continued for the duration as long as you have a membership to warrant same.

R. D. Pryde, sec-treas., Connecticut State GA:

Sorry I won't be able to give you a refreshing picture, as golf in general has fallen off about 40% at most country clubs in this section, but at municipal links the play is just as strong as ever and increasing in some cases. The shop workers realize that play in the open air is very beneficial to them after their work, so with staggered hours or shifts that the factories are running on, the players seek the golf course at all times of the day.

In our talks, the pros of this state have stressed the fact, that every man should have an avocation as well as having a vacation, and if that avocation is in the open air, so much the better. Playing golf compels a man to take in a full supply of oxygen; when he swings he exercises every muscle in his body, besides walking at least four miles every time he plays eighteen holes. This makes young men strong and mature, middle-aged men young

and old men keen. Our first line of defense lies in ourselves. We must be physically and mentally fit to carry out the work that our country needs just now.

The prospects for golf in 1943 are not bright, as many players are going into the service. The gasoline and rubber situation is a great handicap for many who depend upon quick transportation to and from the golf course, but transportation by buses, etc., has greatly increased for this purpose.

The caddie situation is also keenly felt as boys are now employed in factories.

It will also be difficult to keep our courses up to standard on account of lack of labor and loss of income, but I am sure to keep golf going is the aim of men who have the best interests of our country at heart.

Hal A. White, secy., Detroit Distr. GA:

(1) Golf play has increased in both private and public golf courses in this district, especially twilight golf. Unfortunately, I cannot be very specific at this time. We are gathering this information from the various clubs in questionnaire form for our annual report.

(2) In addition to the recreation golf provides, I believe the most valuable phase had and will continue to be the exhibition matches for the purpose of raising money for various War Organizations, such as the USO and the Navy Relief Society. In addition, many of our clubs have raised considerable money for similar organizations, including the Red Cross, by running frequent "Hale America" Tournaments, USO sandtrap donations and various other plans to raise money.

(3) The clubs having public transportation facilities close by seem determined to operate their clubs at least for golf play in 1943. I attended a meeting of one of the prominent clubs here in Detroit last Thursday night and heard the president say that unless the Government issued an order to close clubs, their club was going to remain open as far as the play of golf is concerned. He felt their main problem was labor and they were making the necessary plans to divide their membership, both men and women, assign them certain duties necessary to successfully run the club. He even anticipated they might have to wash dishes, keep the grass cut, and do general house cleaning, etc.

Other clubs of course, far distant from the city and transportation, are formulating plans to submit to their membership

at the coming annual meeting, some of which include closing the club entirely and merely try to maintain enough labor to keep the grass on the fairways and green cut, so that they will not be lost, but virtually do away with the play of golf.

Others may close all services in their clubhouse, but will endeavor to maintain the golf course in playing condition, and as stated above, others will keep their course open, even if they have to call on the membership to do the necessary work.

(4) Course maintenance and clubhouse operations I believe will be curtailed in the very large percentage of clubs, regardless of whether transportation is available or not. I believe most clubs will try to keep their courses in as good condition as possible, for both play and preservation. I believe however that the usual services and facilities of the clubhouse will be materially reduced.

(5) I know of no serious mistakes made by golf thus far in war-time operations.

(6) Gasoline and rubber rationing will be very serious in this district. Detroit as you know is primarily a motor town and public transportation is not adequate. We have no elevated trains, subways or rapid transit of any kind, and because the city is spread out over such a large area and is so flat, many clubs have gone 20 to 30 miles away to find rolling ground. You can see what this will do to 4 gallons of gas. Consequently, of the 38 Private Clubs in this district, I don't believe there will be over a half dozen that can depend upon some form of public transportation. There are perhaps another half dozen close enough to enable their members through group riding to play infrequently.

James M. Robbins, Chmn. Tourn. Comm.,
Metropolitan GA, N. Y.:

(1) This Association held only one day events this year and the attendance showed a slight decrease as compared with last year.

(2) The ease with which money has been raised for charitable organizations at the first tee—Navy Relief Society, USO, etc.

(3) This Association is contemplating again running a very curtailed tournament program, consisting of events which will take no longer than one day to complete.

(4) A great many courses could save a great deal by reducing the size of unnecessary fairways and not keeping the traps so carefully raked.



Harold Callaway, pro at Skytop Club in the Poconos, hacks into the club's old trophies contributed to the nation-wide scrap drive.

(5) Holding any event which takes more than one day to complete.

(6) From the point of view of attendance, rationing has reduced attendance slightly at our one day events, and will undoubtedly cut deeper and deeper into club attendance and club life in 1943.

John Corcoran, executive sec., Massachusetts GA:

With reference to your questionnaire, it is very difficult at this time to give accurate answers. It would be necessary to circularize the members club of this association to get the proper information. However, if my own opinions are of any help I am listing them in the order asked:

(1) Golf play has decreased about one-third of the normal play.

(2) The recreation derived by the men in the armed forces has been immeasurable.

(3) The labor problem will be the golf's chief worry for 1943.

(4) Clubs will have to reduce their restaurant facilities and only the bare necessities of course maintenance should be attended to for the reason as stated in answer three.

(5) That clubs have not reduced their dues to a minimum and thereby attracting a volume of members. With the average golfer already burdened with taxes and with less chance to play golf, he felt that

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(Continued from Page 9)

he didn't get out what he put in in dollars and cents. Not that the average golfer has lost interest but he would rather pay a regular fee for the few times he plays.

(6) Gasoline and rubber rationing will result in practically all the resort courses suspending for the duration. Fortunately, 75% of the courses in Massachusetts are located handy to cities.

M. L. Theaker, sec.-treas., So. Calif. Pub. Links Assn.

(1) Surveys of Southern California golf show increases ranging from 20% in some rural courses, to as high as 50% in the large, centrally located courses.

(2) Probably the outstanding contributions of golf to the nation at war in our district are:

a. The free, healthy and enjoyable entertainment given to thousands of service men.

b. The opportunity of golfers and club members to become better acquainted with service men who have entered the service from all walks of life.

c. Many thousands of dollars have been collected through tournaments, etc. and have been turned over to service men's recreational departments.

(3) Locally, we anticipate some curtailment of golf in 1943. We are not in a position to discuss curtailment at this time.

(4) To date, we cannot recommend changes in maintenance or group operations because of wartime conditions.

(5) We, in Southern California, can truthfully say that few, if any, mistakes have been made by golf associations as concerns wartime operations.

(6) So far, we have only rubber rationing in Southern California, and this has had no ill effect on golf play. In fact, the effect has been to the contrary.

We feel, however, that gasoline rationing will produce some curtailment in golf activity. Our associations, in discussing this probable curtailment, believe that we can intelligently participate in, and keep alive, the interest in golf by having more inter-club contests or home and home events between two conveniently located clubs.

To summarize our comments, we are definitely looking forward to a prosperous

golf year for 1943, assuming, of course, we meet with some success on the war fronts.

James D. Standish, jr., Pres., Detroit DGA; sec. Michigan State Golf League, and long active in national and regional golf affairs:

(1) The amount of play at the richer and closer-in clubs has stayed about steady this year. Outlying clubs have been hit pretty hard. Some public courses have closed; all the private ones are still operating on some basis.

(2) The general conditioning of men very busy in war work has been golf's biggest service. Of course considerable money has been raised for the war agencies through exhibitions. This phase of golf has passed its usefulness now, however.

(3) Clubs composed of older men and in well populated communities will be all right next year. Others may have to close or only keep the grass cut to conserve their courses. Play, I think, will be very light in 1943.

(4) (5) Conditions shift so rapidly that to try to forecast what clubs should do next year is foolish. We can't plan more than a month ahead even now and to try to guess on 6 months ahead is out of the question.

A. F. Platt, pres., Columbus (Ohio) Distr. GA:

By cooperation and intensive work of club representatives, newspapermen, club members, committee men, directors and officers of this association, we have been able to carry out our 1942 program successfully.

The attendance at all events were good and the district amateur championship reached a new high with 33 more entries than we had in 1941. Of course, all awards were war bonds and stamps totalling around a thousand dollars; furthermore, we raised several thousand dollars for the Army & Navy Relief Fund through a Nelson, Hogan, Demaret, Penna. exhibition. Aside of our program, play materially dropped off at all clubs, some as much as one half, by the average golfers.

At this time it is hard to say what the prospects are for 1943. To say the least, it is discouraging because the opposing in-

fluences are greater every day. The demand for man-hours has taken our older caddies from the courses and our younger ones are in school; next spring these boys, in my opinion, will follow the older ones where better pay is obtainable.

Course maintenance will be affected by lack of man power and clubhouse operations curtailed—this is my personal opinion at this time. Many things can happen by spring and this association will continue to function. It may not be advisable to sponsor tournaments in '43 but we will do whatever is best to keep golf properly fitted to wartime recreation.

During the winter we will hold meetings every once in awhile to learn how our clubs, our members and our association may do a mite to help win this war, because the plain, unvarnished truth is one man's guess is as good as another's on what will happen to many golf clubs next year. Our first job is to win this war and if golf can lend a hand in winning it, it shall be done.

By Henry F. Herrmann, Sec., Long Island Golf Assn.

(1) A number of golf clubs on Long Island went out of existence this year because their properties were taken over by the Army or Navy. Several private clubs found it necessary to acquire the status of public links. Membership of the more fortunate clubs fell off approximately ten per cent from the 1941 level, but clubs which are not conveniently located to population centers suffered considerably more.

(2) Maintaining civilian morale, offering enlisted men and officers an opportunity to enjoy golf as a relaxation during furloughs and, lastly, the opportunity to raise funds for the Red Cross, U. S. O., etc., through various tournaments.

(3) The prospects for golf clubs in 1943 are very uncertain. If restrictions on the use of automobiles become more severe, people living at any distance from golf courses may not be able to enjoy their facilities often enough to justify continuing a full membership. What effect the very heavy tax program will have on the surplus which golfers can apply to cost of club membership, remains to be seen. The worst fear is that many golfers, in anticipation of financial difficulties, will be unwilling to obligate themselves by taking out a full year's membership. Many clubs will be confronted



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with the problem of running on a month-to-month basis.

(4) The cost of course maintenance is being reduced to a minimum. Many clubs set out with this idea applicable to 1942 operations, only to find that the membership objected to visible economies. It is quite apparent that in 1943 rigorous economies will have to be exercised if clubs wish to survive.

(5) Plans for sensible economies not always adhered to as the playing season developed due to the fault-finding of thoughtless members who could not understand that many little sacrifices on the part of each individual are necessary in order to make an economy campaign a success.

(6) In a general way this question has already been answered. Each individual club has its own problem due to its situation with respect to the residences of the bulk of its membership. Clubs which are centrally located in populated districts, or those which are adjacent to railroad or satisfactory bus lines have a very small problem. Many individuals will shift their memberships from remote clubs, which they have favored for one reason or another, to more readily accessible clubs. To a certain extent these member rearrangements will average out so well that the overall loss to all the clubs in a given district will be relatively small.

By L. W. Crompton, Jr., Sec., Tampa (Fla.) Golf Assn.

(1) Golf play has declined somewhat during the current year.

(2) We believe, or rather it has been our experience, that tournaments in which we give for prizes war bonds and stamps seems to have met with the general approval of most golfers. We believe that such prizes in tournaments will be an aid in the War effort.

(3) In our opinion there will be a small decline in play during 1943 in this territory.

(4) It seems to us that things should be carried on as normally as possible during the present emergency.

(5) The only mistakes we can see are those of clubs who have tried to operate at a loss due mainly to lack of transportation. Such clubs in our opinion should pool their membership with clubs closer in with the understanding that a portion of the revenues derived be used in maintaining the club whose members

have been transferred.

(6) The prime reason for the decline in golf play may be attributed to the gas and rubber situation.

Clifford E. Wagoner, secy., Indiana GA:

(1) Play has increased in our territory at both private and public courses from 10% to 20%—especially is this true of play on holidays and week-ends.

(2) The willingness on the part of the golfers to make donations at the first tee for Red Cross, USO, Army and Navy, and other forms of service relief.

(3) We think the prospects for golf clubs in small cities where gasoline rationing and rubber tires won't be such a factor, is excellent—we are afraid that golf in larger cities will run into serious difficulty unless some arrangement can be made with "club" vehicles to meet members at the bus line terminals and city transportation terminals.

(4) The only revision of the course maintenance would be to keep the rough short and hazards clean, in order to speed up play primarily and also conserve golf balls.

(5) Calling off the National Open and National Amateur.

T. F. Reese, sec-treas., Ohio GA:

(1) Golf play in this section of the country has not yet fallen off appreciably. It is true that a good many club members have joined the armed forces but their places have been taken by merchants who have more time to devote to physical exercises and by officers and enlisted men stationed in the various cities who take advantage of the clubs' invitations to use their courses when they can. Some of the public courses even report an increase in play resulting from the influx of war workers to plants who seek this form of diversion from their labors.

(2) The large sums raised by the clubs for the Red Cross through staging "Hale America" tournaments, the benefits accruing to the USO and Army and Navy Relief Societies, and last but not least, the opportunity for those engaged in the most grueling work of their lives to get occasional recreation from the game.

(3) Many will fail because the demands upon members through taxation will prohibit continuation of membership. Clubs situated long distances from centers of population will suffer most because of the rubber and gasoline rationing program.

(4) Shortage of man-power will auto-

matically curtail operations in all departments of golf clubs. Golf course grooming consequently will be at a new low as will all types of service in club restaurants, locker rooms, etc.

(5) I can see no mistakes that can be charged against golf.

(6) None as yet, but when the gasoline rationing goes into effect in this section in November, the action will undoubtedly be strongly felt.

Robt. J. Foley, sec.-treas., West Virginia GA:

(1) Despite slight increase in membership in private clubs, play decreased 10%. Public courses report an increase of 20% in play.

(2) As no army camps are located within this state, golf's service during the present emergency has not changed.

(3) As long as existing and pending restrictions are imposed, clubs that are not within reasonable walking distance have little chance for sufficient activity to warrant full operation.

(4) Will depend entirely upon membership. Those without sufficient income for full operation should maintain greens and fairways to protect investment, and

should there be insufficient revenue to operate clubhouse, they should be closed.

(6) As the major portion of this state has had no gasoline rationing, the ultimate effect cannot be actually predicted, but as the majority of the clubs are located 6 to 8 miles from the cities, and in locations that require excessive consumption of gasoline, it is reasonable to assume that this feature alone will reduce play at least 75%, which will not apply to clubs within walking distance of sufficient members.

Frank J. Loewe, Cincinnati, O.; Sec. Tri-State GA:

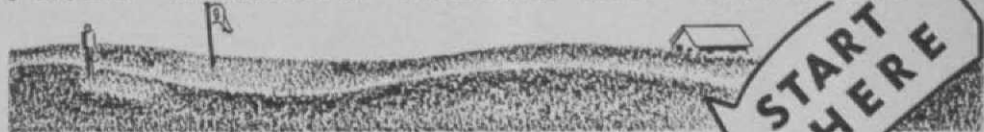
(2) Definite financial benefit to Red Cross, Army and Navy Relief and USO have made a good showing for golf.

(3) Judging from influence of tire-saving reduction of auto travel in this territory, golf clubs may expect at least 20% reduction in play in 1943.

(4) Diligent supervision of all expense and no improvement or alteration program. Prices for clubhouse service must be raised and course maintenance standards lowered.

(5) Clubs in this section operated very wisely this year on basis of strict thrift in supplying war-time recreation.

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