

Ft. Knox Officers Salvage KY. OPEN



The event was not a financial success, was not expected to be. But as a morale builder for Ft. Knox soldiers, the tourney was everything expected.

By EARL RUBY

THE 1943 Kentucky Open golf tournament was salvaged by the Officers Club at Ft. Knox, home of the Armored Force. How it happened, how it was accomplished, and what were the results may be of interest to golfers in all states possessing military posts with golf links within the reservation or close by.

The Kentucky State Golf Association was polling its member clubs to see if they would support an open tournament, and "no's" were fluttering back like snow in Alaska. The year before the association had attempted to perpetuate the meet (after dropping the amateur for the duration) and had lost \$150 out of its already slim treasury.

Oscar Widmer, professional at the Seneca Golf Club in Louisville, suggested that as a last resort, the meet be put on at Ft. Knox, simply as an entertainment for the soldiers, with prizes limited to the entry fees.

Morgan Boggs, pro at the post (30 miles south of Louisville) carried the suggestion to Lt. Col. George W. Weego, chairman of golf at the Ft. Knox Golf Club. The Colonel liked the idea. He thought the meet would be attractive to the soldiers interested in "name" players. Sadly, there was no player left in Kentucky that anybody but his caddie would enjoy watching, with the exception of Bill Kaiser, the Hillerich & Bradsby salesman.

"In that case," said the colonel, "we take over the tournament and get our own players." So the Officers Club Board of Governors dug down and came up with \$2,500 and asked the PGA to send down any top players it could find. The state golf association and state PGA offered

any assistance needed, but the post chose civilian helpers at random and did an excellent job of it, with military men in the key positions.

Outstanding labor at the starting tee was contributed by Joseph S. "Uncle Joe" Dickson, for many years starter at the National Public Links tournaments. He was handicapped by the fact that no arrangement had been made to keep the tee in contact with the barracks and mess hall frequented by the players, but he managed to keep play fairly timely with it all. This will be a point for clubs to remember in attempting a meet of this kind. The barracks may be far removed, and some system of notification has to be rigged up. Call boys aren't enough.

Lee S. Read, Homer Baker, Gordon Guernsey, Cliff Lussky, J. L. Paddock and Chief Myers, all golfing officials from Louisville and Lexington, remained on the job around the scoring and starting tables and did excellent jobs.

All Fees to Red Cross

The entry fee was \$5 and spectator fees \$1 for all three days (pro-amateur on Friday and open on Saturday and Sunday). All these fees, plus money from sale of programs and auctioning of score cards, went to the Post Red Cross Auxiliary. The Officers Club gave the \$2,500 without any possibility of hope of receiving a cent in return.

"It is a part of the war department's athletic policy to build morale," explained Col. Weego, "and I speak both from a spectator and a player standpoint. We not only provided entertainment for thousands of soldiers, but had many service men participate and win prizes. That was repayment enough for the Officers Club."

The entries were received at the Ft. Knox Officers Club and the pro shop.

WARNING TO GOLFERS

THE THREATENED SHORTAGE OF GOLF BALLS IS HERE. THERE MAY NOT BE ENOUGH TO FINISH OUT THE SEASON ...THEREFORE—FROM NOW ON—YOU SHOULD TURN IN AN OLD GOLF BALL FOR EVERY BALL YOU BUY.

SIGNED:
ACUSHNET PROCESS SALES COMPANY
A. G. SPALDING & BROS. INC.
UNITED STATES RUBBER COMPANY
WILSON SPORTING GOODS COMPANY
THE WORTHINGTON BALL COMPANY
THE L. A. YOUNG COMPANY

MEMBERS GOLF BALL MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

This sign for pro shop display is one of the means the Golf Ball Manufacturers Assn. is using to bring to the attention of all golfers that unless old golf balls are turned in as new balls are bought, all golfers may not be able to play the season out.

More than 110 entered. Col. Weego personally directed most of the committees, and settled all questions of policy in a truly military style. He also supervised distribution of awards, housing the players in barracks, feeding them at a nearby mess hall, and entertaining them at night at the Officers' Club.

From a financial point, the tournament was not a success, as only \$1,500 was turned over to the Red Cross Auxiliary. The Officers Club could have given \$2,500 and not staged the tournament—but . . .

It wasn't put on as a money-maker. It was highly successful as an entertainment for the soldiers and as a participant sport for many of them.

"It accomplished everything we expected of it," said Col. Weego, "and we are happy about the whole thing. Of course we would like to have turned several thousands of dollars over to the Red Cross but being 30 miles from Louisville we hardly dared hope for a large gallery of civilians, and we naturally let all service men watch free."

Byron Nelson won the first prize of a

\$1,000 War Bond for his 72-hole total of 273, Chick Harbert, second at 278, received a \$500 bond. Bob Hamilton, third, got \$250, and Bill Kaiser and Dale Morey, amateur, tied for fourth at 295. The prize was \$100. The pro-amateur went to Nelson and Pvt. W. Straighttiff.

Kirkwood Tours Camps, Urges More Service Golf Facilities

JOE KIRKWOOD has been making exhibition tours of southern army camps on a schedule that is tougher than any the trick-shot trooper ever has made before. This time he's presenting the shows for nix and giving the boys welcome entertainment that pre-war golfers have paid a large sum to see. Joe remarks about his most recent camp tour:

"I have traveled rather fast and furiously and played practically every day. My show has been well received everywhere and never in all my travels have I ever performed before a more appreciative audience.

"I have worked on parade grounds, air fields, ball diamonds, stadiums and open fields of all kinds. I have found quite a number of driving ranges at various camps. Fort Bragg is the most golf minded—with three golf courses. Ft. Benning has an exceptionally good 18 holes. Camp Gordon at Augusta, Georgia, has a fine driving range, also a large putting green for the boys. Ft. McClelland's driving range will accommodate about 100 players at one time. Everywhere the golf game is very popular. The boys seem hungry for entertainment.

"It's a pity all camps cannot put in driving ranges. The problem seems lack of clubs and balls. I have started the golf bug in many camps. Have exhibited my zigs and zags before many thousands of officers and enlisted men. Many of them are anxious to play. The evenings are long and in many ways lonely around an Army Camp. The boys have nothing much to do. Socking golf balls would be better than getting soaked."

Several other tours of army camps and navy stations have been scheduled for Kirkwood. He and his club are working together to give the men in uniform the tops in golf entertainment of a sort that almost any military post can have with facilities available.