

GAS LESS—GOLF GOES ON

By JOE GRAFFIS

SOME hopeful signs of the energetic continuance of golf on a revised basis to meet wartime conditions come early this year from the Pacific Coast and South. These areas are being closely watched for significant indications that may forecast the 1943 golf year generally in the United States. Due to the extent to which golf in these territories must rely on automobile and bus transportation, weather conditions, and intensive wartime industrial activities, it is thought by many that as the southwest goes, so will go the nation in golf.

Although in the San Francisco Bay area, the Richmond GC—one of the smaller clubs that came back strong after a depression bump—seems to reflect the spirit of most of the clubs in the south and southwest. A folder giving names and addresses of Richmond members prints the statement of Pat Markovich, pro and mgr. of the club, declaring:

"I am extremely confident that gas rationing will do more to make Richmond Golf Club a more solid organization than any other plan or suggestion ever tried.

"My reasons for thinking so: **First**—it will be a means of having our members get acquainted with their golfing neighbors; **Second**—sharing of cars will solve our transportation problem; **Third**—golfers will arrive at the club in foursomes. This in return will help solve our parking problem; **Fourth**—we will keep physically fit by playing golf."

S. M. McFedries, president of Annandale GC, Pasadena, Calif., Says:

"It is a little early to determine just what effect gasoline rationing is going to have on club business. We have had (to mid-December) eight resignations, all from people who live outside Pasadena. We are fortunate in that we have rather a full membership, and that we are only five minutes from the center of Pasadena.

"Golf play appears to be cut down somewhat, except on the week-ends. On Saturdays and Sundays the course is quite busy."

George E. Armstrong, secy., Southern California GA, views the situation:

"It is too early for us to give you any definite information about the effect gasoline rationing is going to have on clubs in our section. Most everyone started out with a full tank of gas and it will be late

AS GOLFDOM went to press the Office of Price Administration announced an order, effective noon Jan. 7, forbidding all pleasure driving by holders of A, B, and C cards in 17 Atlantic seaboard states.

The order said, "The presence of passenger cars at any gathering for purposes of sport or amusement will be taken as prima facie evidence that gasoline rations and tires are being dissipated needlessly and illegally." Driving to social engagements also is banned.

Penalty is cancellation of gasoline rations.

Acute shortage of gasoline and fuel oil and inability to transport adequate supplies to eastern seaboard states gives basis for belief that the order may not be extended to states nearer to petroleum sources, although strong criticism of unusually heavy private car traffic to the Rose Bowl football game leads some to expect extension of more stringent gas rationing to curtail pleasure driving.

There has been considerable criticism of excessive use of private cars in driving to race meetings in the Atlantic seaboard states. Golfers generally have gone strong for car-pooling to keep recreation gas use in their field at minimum.

At present no order further restricting gas use in course maintenance in Atlantic seaboard states has been released by the OPA.

The OPA order has impressed on golf clubs everywhere in the U. S. necessity of depending on public transportation.

Golf was going strong before the automobile was popularized and will be able to revise its transportation to get through the war alive.

in January before conditions settle down.

"Many clubs have had resignations where members have transferred to other clubs nearer their own residences. Other golfers have had to give up the game entirely or, at least, restrict their play to once or twice a month at either their own club or at the nearest public course.

"Most all clubs are making a sincere effort to get their members to share rides and this campaign is beginning to take effect.

"One of the most serious troubles in this area is labor. Southern California has many aircraft manufacturers, shipyards and hundreds of other war industries employing tremendous numbers of people, and on top of this Los Angeles

County is the largest producer of agricultural products of all counties in the country. Farm labor gets high wages and, of course, all of the war plants pay many times more than golf clubs can pay for labor. All this means that maintenance on our courses is seriously restricted. All of our courses depend on sprinkler systems of some type that require labor, and as a final result many clubs may find it necessary to eliminate several holes or perhaps an entire 9 in order to keep up with the remainder.

"There continues to be a great interest in golf in this section. Dec. 20 we held an exhibition golf tournament at Wilshire CC for the benefit of army and navy camps and had the largest attendance for any one day tournament in our experience in spite of the fact that the day was marred by heavy morning fog.

"Apparently, our usual tournament schedule will be considerably restricted next year. Our Association has for 40 years conducted Inter-Club Team Match competitions which have been of the greatest value to golf. So many of our young and better players are out of the game now that it may be impossible to continue this activity on anything like the previous scale.

"No doubt we will have an annual association championship of some type in the middle of the year. Our annual championship tournament in May drew an entry of 246 and the State Amateur Championship in September had an entry of over 500. Next year we would be lucky to have one-fourth this many in either of these events."

Willie Hunter, pro at Riviera CC, Pacific Palisades, Calif., observes the situation: "First let me say that Southern California had in 1942 one of the biggest golf years of its history.

"Since gas rationing, play has fallen off considerably at clubs away from the centers of transportation. As you know, Los Angeles has no real inter-urban service, and because of the War Industrial situation alone, such areas as ours, where there is abundance of gas and movement is 90% personal autos, should have better treatment. Maybe we will soon.

"Taking my club as an example: We have, in round numbers, 400 members. My analysis shows we have 150 within a radius of two miles. Another 200 live within an eight mile radius and the remainder are scattered. The first group can manage to keep up their play. The second group are hard hit with a 16 mile

round trip—can't be done on an A card. The third group is resigning.

"Play during the week has fallen off 30% and 25% week-ends. At clubs nearer in, play is keeping up, especially if they have bus service. Riviera has nothing in the way of public transportation.

"I am of the opinion that it is too soon to judge the effect of gas rationing on golf. I will know better in January when people have worked out their own limitations, and I am hopeful that many who are by snap judgment passing up their golf will find a means to resume.

"It seems reasonable to assume that golf does not interfere with the war effort and is decidedly beneficial to the health of business men whose occasional relaxation is practically a necessity.

"Our investments in golf are big and hard to carry, so let's hope that undue pressure will not hit too hard before we put the pressure on the Nazis and Nips."

Joe Novak, widely known pro at Bel-Air CC, Los Angeles, says:

"A check of our play for the first 17 days of rationing revealed that we had 20% more play than during the same period the previous year. Maybe this is not a fair comparison because of the shock of the Pearl Harbor news last year.

"However, we were only 10% less than 1940 which was an excellent golf year, so it seems that rationing has affected us but little.

"Our club is located 10 miles from the Los Angeles city hall but is actually within the area of Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Culver City and the Santa Monica Bay district.

"Unfortunately only one bus line comes near the course, so practically all travel to and from the club this year has been by private automobile, carrying more passengers than usual, so there certainly can be no criticism of our members not cooperating to save rubber and gas in getting the recreation they require."

W. H. (Bill) Johnson, greenkeeper and manager of the municipal golf courses at Los Angeles, said on Dec. 17:

"We find that golf play here follows the universal condition at this time. Play has fallen off at country club courses about 15 per cent during week days. This is more or less compensated by the additional heavy play over week-ends. Invitation tournaments where travel becomes necessary, are practically out. On the other hand, club tournaments are getting better support than ever.

"The golf ball situation seems to worry

the golfers more than the gasoline rationing. At public courses, play is heavier than ever. People are sharing rides of from four to six to a car. Many of them are riding bicycles to courses. Golfers seem to find a way to get to their favorite course regardless of the gas rationing.

"Various defense plants have formed teams and have adopted different courses as their home course. Lockheed and Vega plants are using the Griffith Park courses as their home courses. This use of recreational facilities offered by golf courses follows governmental requests for recreation for war workers. With the added burden of constant close, precise work done at defense plants, the majority of workers have had to reconstruct their whole mode of living. Were it not for the relaxation offered by golf, the pace would be killing; sanitariums and hospitals full. The worker claims that golf and other form of recreational sports help them to relax and to obtain a necessary rest. Upon being asked which course they prefer, they just don't care; all they want is exercise.

"At those courses happily situated on some direct bus or street railway line the drop in attendance is hardly noticeable; gas rationing does not mean anything. Here again golf ball shortage appears as the only problem and then not a very acute one. At Griffith Park we have only a limited bus schedule. Consequently our play has suffered. Play has fallen off about 15 per cent on week days. Week-end play still stays up. In fact, we reach a saturation point early in the day."

James K. McGuinness, president of Lakeside GC of Hollywood, says that the club probably is not a fair example of the effect of gas rationing on country clubs in general. To a considerable extent its membership is composed of actors, directors and writers working in motion pictures and radio. They either have no time free for golf for several weeks-ends, or they have more time than the usual country club member in their between-pictures periods. He adds:

"Thus far, our week-end play has been about normal, and our bar and restaurant business slightly above the average of this season for the last five years.

"Although Southern California has grown with the automobile and, consequently, its public transport systems are woefully inadequate in this emergency, our course can be reached, in a round-about way, by trolley and connecting bus. Members are making some use of this

means of transportation, adjusting themselves to travel in the non-rush hours.

"Our best plan, however, has been to divide the residential areas of our community into districts and to furnish each member with a full list of the members living within easy distance of each other, as well as with addresses and telephone numbers. Our members have thus been able to pool their automobile travel, without too much inconvenience, so that the regular week-end players need drive to the club only once out of four, or five visits. We have found this helps considerably both in cutting down gasoline consumption and in aiding our members to get the exercise they need.

"Out of an active membership of approximately 400, we have more than 50 in the armed services. We have suspended dues payments for these members for the duration, which, of course, makes an appreciable cut in the club's revenues. Thus far, we have not found it necessary to curtail any of these essential services rendered by the club, but our membership is fully prepared to accept any retrenchments the future may force. We are determined that Lakeside shall be a place to which our service men can return when they come back to peace and the way of life they knew before."

Larry Nabholz, of the Lakewood CC, Dallas, Tex., and president of the Texas PGA reports:

"Lakewood has been going along about the same as we did last year. On account of its location on a street car line and bus route, we should not suffer any from a transportation problem. These Texans are not the people to complain about inconveniences in wartime. Look at what their young men are doing in the war and you'll realize that the Texas spirit isn't something to be bothered by the possibility of having to go to a little trouble in getting to a golf course when the civilian men and women can keep their energy in tune.

"We keep plenty of action at the club all the time. The club serves a special buffet dinner Thursday and Sunday evenings at 75 cents a throw. This includes a full meal of all they can eat. With food rationing and higher food costs that will be altered, but the alteration will still fit right into the war plan.

"During the summer we hold putting contests three nights a week; Wednesday and Sundays for adults and Thursdays for boys and girls. We have bingo three nights a week the year around. On put-

ting contest nights, the Fellowship committee puts up golf balls as prizes.

"There are other clubs in this district not as fortunately situated as we are for transportation and their closing is inevitable. A couple already have gone. The clubs closer in get the members thus cast loose. Lakewood already has had new members from closed clubs.

"We have hired older men for course work and looked far ahead in buying our equipment needs for a couple of seasons. We expect a good season in 1943 and intend to do everything possible to keep Texas energy and spirit at its highest point for war work. In this part of the

country they show their best when the going is the most difficult."

Bob Goldwater says: "Play at the Phoenix (Ariz.) CC has held up extremely well so far this year. Of course, we are situated practically in town and there is both bus and street car service to the club. Also, a great many members live within easy walking distance.

"Then too, we have a large number of officers now stationed in the Valley because of our air fields. A lot of new people have come in with the defense plants that are springing up in Phoenix. This influx of new people may tend to offset any loss we may have in regular membership."

Gobs Hold Puerto Rican Tourney



IN San Juan, Puerto Rico, a lack of clubs is no reason for Navy enlisted men in Puerto Rico not to play golf. Their Navy lockers and sea bags hold no golf clubs but the Berwind CC has undertaken to furnish not only the course but clubs and golf balls, if necessary. Its working. All any sailor—or any other service man—need do now is present himself at the club and make known his desire to play. If no one else is there to take him on, Jimmy Rue, the club pro, will.

To stimulate Navy golf interest recently the Berwind club staged a tournament for all enlisted men in the San Juan area and got quite a turn-out. One of the rules of the tournament was that "previous experience in golf was not necessary." Some of the members felt this was taking a long chance with the greens, but every-

thing worked out satisfactorily and no irreparable damage was done. The boys, themselves, volunteered to make any repairs they could.

On the course par 72 haven't been broken, despite the fact that it has been in continuous use for more than 20 years by some of the best players that have come to the Island. Chief Petty Officer C. V. Tarter in winning the Services Tourney shot 80 and John M. Sokash, seaman second class, pushed him hard with an 81. Tarter is from Louisville, Ky., and Sokash is a native of Pittstown, Pa. Sokash was caddie champ at the Fox Hill CC in 1935 and 1936 in Pittstown.

The winner received a \$50 watch from the Bacardi Corp. of America and the also rans received other suitable awards from Bacardi.