

GOLF IN WAR? HERE'S WHY!

By HERB GRAFFIS

JUST what is the justification for continuing golf club operations in wartime? If there isn't adequate reason for the game, golf should confess to being unnecessary and abandon its \$800,000,000 property investment without tears. After all, \$800,000,000 is only a small installment on the price of American liberty.

If there isn't adequate justification for golf club operations in wartime, certainly the golfers have patriotism far above their golf enthusiasm and will immediately toss golf into the discard for the duration on the mere suspicion that the game might be interfering with successful conduct of the war. In fact, even without adequate considered logic, some golfers have given up the game in frightened haste for fear their participation in golf might be handicapping war effort.

But on the other hand, if golf can help the war effort, it is the responsibility of patriotism and common sense to boldly state the case and begin vigorous offense against those who seem to be devoting an undue proportion of their efforts to attacking golf and other sports as a questionable contribution to winning the war.

Critics Are Human

In appraising the criticism of golf, and in a honest effort to determine golf's wartime status, one must start by realizing the critics are fallible human beings. Some amusing inconsistencies pop up when the source of criticism is analyzed in establishing its validity. For instance, congress worries about the serious problem of absenteeism in war plants. Absenteeism in congress when voting is to be done on major matters is 13%; more than twice the per cent of war plant absenteeism.

There are critics who advocate trimming American life to the essentials of war work and doing away with everything else. If consistent, their attitude should call for abolition of all amusements; for going to bed at nightfall to save light bills; for getting up at daybreak to walk to work so power and transportation equipment would be saved; for wearing clothes and shoes until no longer usable; for eating and drinking the minimum required for health; for the complete abandonment of

all business, social, educational, and ethical activities not directly and urgently required for the prosecution of the war.

In short, if their reasoning with respect to the complete abandonment of golf were followed through consistently and thoroughly, this nation would be surrendered to totalitarian ideology. So we would have lost what the nation is striving to preserve.

Importance of Balance

But, fortunately, the critics are human beings and, as such, are mainly interested in their own personal welfare, notwithstanding a genuine overlying desire to assure the welfare of the entire nation. However, they do not consider the elements constituting a properly balanced and effective war program from a correct perspective.

They do not consider, for instance, that the time the German and occupied nation civilian populace is compelled to devote annually to listening to the broadcasts of speeches by Hitler, Goebbels, Goering, et al, far exceeds in man hours the amount of time devoted to golf by American golfers and club employees.

They do not consider that Russia during its desperate and magnificent fight for survival has maintained a program of balanced recreation, and now is conducting one of the greatest national sports demonstrations ever held anywhere in the world.

They do not consider that the artificial, indoor, high-pressure monotony of wartime civilian effort demands compensatory escape, relaxation, and refreshment to keep manual and mental labor at peak output and in keenest zest.

They do not know—as informed American industrialists and doctors do—that Germany's failure to balance the work and rest programs for its civilian populace has sharply reduced the Nazis wartime production capacity.

They do not recognize that what they theoretically plan in the virtual establishment of a slave labor plan in the United States has been condemned as grossly inefficient by slave labor experience in nations under Axis rule.

They do not appreciate the important difference between organization for effec-

No one believes victory would be won quicker in this war if all pleasure was strictly forbidden. People, if they are to be efficient and maintain a high morale, must have some relaxation and fun. Gasoline and tire rationing obviously are going to limit people's use of golf clubs, but when used within these limits, there is no disposition on the part of the government to make a sin out of golf playing. People are stopped from taking long motor trips for pleasure, but they still need to get out into the open air. In such a situation, continued reasonable use and support of golf clubs may fairly be interpreted not as detracting from the war program but as supporting it.

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tive employment of the physical and mental capacities of free Americans, and edicts limiting the conscientious American's opportunities for keeping himself in best condition to do considerably more than his normal amount and grade of work.

These critics make the human mistake of forgetting they are dealing with human beings. They have stampeded some people away from a rational view of the war-time recreation problem, especially as it concerns golf. Unhappily some of these who have been stampeded indicate by their reaction that they are in need of what golf supplies to the civilized, emotional American in wartime. Already worrying about business, about sons and the sons of friends away in war, about civilian war activities, the sincere citizen, without knowing it, has worn himself down to a point where he is easy prey to the propaganda of the unbalanced theorist.

Consider some reasons as advanced by an intensely patriotic friend of mine:

- (1) Members should spend leisure time in war efforts, such as victory gardens;
- (2) Money spent at the club should be spent for War bonds;
- (3) Club employees should be engaged in war industries.

Let's take up these, one by one:

Victory gardens should be attended to, but the time required by them does not preclude golf. The wartime function of leisure is to keep the citizen from going stale. A variety of wholesome leisure occupations is recommended by the doctors, who are the really competent authorities in directing a balanced work-leisure program for wartime.

My friend's second point is theoretically lovely, but practically there's nothing to

it as long as humans are humans. Maintenance of national economy requires the continuance of tax contributing enterprises and golf clubs are probably the nation's leading source of sports tax revenue; even in excess of the various state revenues derived from race horse betting. Bond selling and war relief financing done by golf clubs may come close to equalling the annual revenues of most golf clubs. A lot of figuring on paper would have to be done before this possible objection could be precisely appraised.

As for the employees of clubs, switching to war industry, how many of them are there? This season they will be at a minimum and in the great majority of cases unqualified for war work, even with considerable training which, let it be remembered, will involve time, money and probable waste in material and man hours in attempting to fit round pegs into square holes.

It all adds up that golf loafers are out. But golf as a reward and refresher for those who are doing their level patriotic damndest is logical, legitimate and valuable. If it weren't it would have been folded long before this by those who are convinced—after due deliberation—that golf on its drastically revised basis should be retained as a corollary of intense war effect.

Sliding Dues—Brae Burn CC (Houston) has slashed its dues in half and will charge 50 cents a round to players until enough is paid in to make up the old monthly dues. Then play is free.

Board of Directors of the club explained: "The directors feel that the plan will be fair to all members, the active and inactive alike. The member who is fortunate enough to have time in which to play golf regularly will pay no more than he does now for the privilege, while the member who is working long hours to produce the materials essential to the conduct of the war and can get away from his office or factory only once or twice a month for an afternoon's recreation, will pay only the overhead charge, plus the small service charge when he does play.

"In other words, the man who can play several times a week will pay about the same he is paying now, while the member who cannot play regularly will pay his pro-rata share for the upkeep of the course."