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SEASON PROVES GOLF HAS MET WAR'S DEMANDS

Golf, according to early season forecasts, was due to stagger through 1943, badly handicapped by conditions brought by war.

Instead, as the following district reports indicate, the game didn't do badly at all. Retrenchment was in order everywhere and some private clubs took it on the chin harder than nearby courses open to public play. But play-volume, the index of the game's health, was uniformly up nationwide, with the exception of those areas with the more drastic gasoline restrictions. And even in those areas, golf posted an excellent record.

Following are analyses from representative metropolitan areas of how golf fared in the past half year.

California Had Best Year Since '28

By DARSIE L. DARSIE

FROM the standpoint of public interest and public participation more individuals are playing golf in California today than have at any time since the "golden days of 1928."

Tournament play has, of course, been curtailed, but club events, held each week, draw larger fields than they have for many years. The California Women's GA cancelled its entire program in 1943 because of gas and rubber rationing and the Southern California Womens' association followed suit—but mens' tournaments have been streamlined most successfully and have been closely tied into the war effort through bond sales, etc.

The annual California Amateur, played

at Del Monte, drew a field of 400 players, not up to the 1942 total of 550, but still large enough to produce a great tournament. The Del Monte womens' championship, played at Cypress Point course, found Mrs. George Zaharias (Babe Didrikson) winning the 36-hole final by a score of 13 and 12—with no round "out of the seventies."

The Amateur championship was streamlined to meet war conditions in a most interesting manner. All member courses were rated and a field of 485 golfers qualified on their home courses, adding to their scores the rating figures indicated. On this basis a very strong field of 32 players qualified for the match play at Hill-

crest CC, which can be reached by bus, 15 minutes from downtown Los Angeles.

The tournament was an unqualified success, with galleries paying a fee—all money realized being turned over to the Citizens Committee of the Army and Navy. By permitting players to qualify at their home courses a minimum of gas and rubber was used and little, if any, time was lost to the war effort.

Movie Stars Help Out

The Southern California PGA, the S. C. G. A. and members of Lakeside's Country Club have cooperated most successfully in putting on Victory Tournaments at Wilshire, Santa Ana, San Bernardino and Ventura. In each case all receipts have been turned over to war charities and stars of the links as well as motion picture stars, Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Babe Didriksen, Andy Clyde, Mickey Rooney, Johnny Weissmuller and a host of others, have given of their time, freely, to make these events successful. The Victory Tournament at Santa Ana CC, close by the Santa Ana Army Air Base, drew galleries of more than 7,500 persons.

In many ways clubs have been turning their attention to aiding the war effort.

Oakmont, owned by the "banana king," W. W. Crenshaw, proved the champion Victory Garden club of them all. Crenshaw, himself, letting his racing stable run itself, has turned to the business of raising tomatoes, potatoes, corn, lettuce, carrots, egg plants, etc., with a vengeance. For months he has spent most of each day, hoe in hand, watching his gardens grow. From the middle of August to the middle of October, members, passing through the golf grill, were urged to purchase lug boxes of beautiful tomatoes—with a dozen new fruit jars thrown in with each lug. An average of 500 pounds of tomatoes a day was harvested in this time. More than 40 acres of the rough at Oakmont is used in Mr. Crenshaw's private garden.

Other clubs, too, have found victory gardens the means of keeping their tables in green vegetables, the Los Angeles CC having one of the best.

Buy Bond; Replay Round

During the Third War Loan drive, Oakmont put on a special tournament in which a player bought a bond to enter the 18-hole medal play handicap event. If he didn't like his round he bought another bond and played it over. In four days time more than 240 bonds, totalling \$7,800, were

sold. Other clubs are planning similar events.

The Southern California Open, played for \$1,000 worth of war bonds over the county-owned Santa Anita course, found a field of more than 200 competing. A most spectacular final round saw Willie Hunter, former British Amateur champion and now veteran professional of the Riviera CC, overtake Lloyd Mangrum with a birdie at the 71st hole—and then go on to win with a par at the last hole, 278 to Mangrum's 279. Marvin Stahl, now a war worker in Los Angeles, was third with 280. Just before the start of the final round, Bob Hope took the first tee and sold \$12,000 in bonds to the gallery.

William P. Bell, president of the 36-hole Sunset Fields public links, reports capacity play every week-end at his courses. They are located on both bus and electric car lines and are but six miles from downtown Los Angeles—consequently, are profiting by the gas and rubber situation. However, strange as it may seem, Griffith Park's municipal courses, much farther out, still are playing to full capacity both through the week and on week-ends.

Food Is Problem

Country clubs, with a very few exceptions, are meeting the challenge of conditions successfully, although most have streamlined operations to meet conditions. Few of them serve dinners and few permit members to have guests for lunch. Food rationing has hit them rather hard in this respect. However, practically all close-in clubs have filled their membership lists and have waiting lists established. Golf courses have suffered a lack of experienced help and they are rather ragged and unkempt in contrast to their usual immaculate appearance. Caddies, save at a few of the clubs, are conspicuous by their absence. Even so, play has not fallen off, members either pushing caddie carts or carrying Sunday bags with half a dozen clubs.

There have been some casualties worth noting.

The once exclusive Flintridge CC, scene of George Von Elm's first California triumph in Championship back in 1921, has disappeared. For three or four years it struggled along under a bonded indebtedness of some \$280,000. A new deal, on a monthly rental basis, carried the club along for a year. Finally, a few weeks ago, Keith Spaulding, horseman, polo player and sportsman, purchased the second nine holes and made the 60 acres

over into riding trails, jumping fields, etc. The first nine holes, after a brief existence, gave up the ghost.

Cheviot Hills, formerly the very popular California Country Club, found a bonded indebtedness of \$480,000 too much—reorganized with the bondholders agreeing to more than cut the figure in half—and still could not make the grade. The club was taken over by the Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company which closed both course and field house—but at the moment a new group, with the mystery man golfer, John Montague, at its head, has taken an option on the property and proposes to open it as an exclusive motion picture club in the near future. It will be called Rolling Hills.

In the San Diego area an interesting situation developed when the San Diego CC, at Chula Vista, in financial difficulties, sold golf course and club to the Rohr Aircraft Company as a recreation center for employees Ralph Guldahl, former Open champion, is the professional—and business is booming.

The old Rancho Club, owned by the United States Government and operated as a public links by the late La Verne Nichols, "blew up" when Nichols died a few months ago. Today the City of Los Angeles is negotiating with the Federal

government and expects to purchase the property and operate it as a public links. It is close in and good property—but Uncle Sam has a million dollar tax lien against it.

There, in a rambling sort of way, is the golf picture in Southern California. Clubs that are doing well are doing wonderfully—but most of the food served is of the non-ration variety. Professionals in many cases devote eight hours to war work and perhaps four hours to golf instruction. Caddies are, largely, in military service and an acute shortage prevails everywhere. The golf ball situation isn't bad. Players purchasing golf balls are required to turn in old balls.

The clubs that have failed seemed destined to fail anyway, as in every case their downfall could be attributed to top heavy bond issues against them. It has, actually, been surprising that those that are closed held on as long as they did. Today both clubs and public links are in excellent financial condition and will, assuredly, weather the storm.

But—

The most frequent topic of locker room conversation you hear is the question: "When is Washington going to let us have a little rubber for golf balls?"

Washington Courses Jammed All Season

By WALTER McCALLUM

GOLF around the nation's Capital went into a sharp nose dive on the competitive side during 1943, but where the solons of the game early in the year decided competition was no go, the golfers themselves tossed the challenge back at them with more friendly rounds than ever before played on overcrowded courses.

Early in the year the Congressional CC, one of Washington's largest links organizations, with a membership of around 800, was taken over by the War Department as a base for military training on Congressional's nearly 400 acres. That threw hundreds of golfers out of a place to play. They flocked to other clubs. The net result: long waiting lists at several of the dozen clubs around the Capital, a frenzied rush to get in, and many forced to forego the game entirely because of crowded country clubs.

Public links concessionaire S. G. Loeffler, operator of 5 public courses

within the circumscribed limits of the District of Columbia, closed his East Potomac Park course, center of public activity and the Navy took over the West Potomac Park layout, building dormitories on the course. That shunted public course play to Rock Creek Park and Anacostia Park for whites, and Langston for colored. Play at all courses was heavy, but lacking in competition.

Two periods of no-pleasure automobile driving cut down private club play, but despite the gasoline edict the golfers thronged all courses, and on lifting of the pleasure driving ban the game returned to above normal activity. So far this year all clubs around Washington report much higher play than for the same period a year ago.

Washington is crowded with service officers who get an afternoon a week off for exercise. During the long days of summer they slipped out late in the afternoon.