

Pacific Northwest Golf In High Gear With War

New devotees, mostly servicemen, liven coast's pay course play.
Club's finances better than in pre-war days.

By **ALEX C. ROSE**

Seattle (Wash.) Post-Intelligencer

GOLF throughout Washington and Oregon and the Province of British Columbia continued popular in 1943. This despite the black cloud that was thrown over this area when the Pacific Northwest GA and several other gold organizations in this area crawled into the hideout with the USGA two years ago.

That was a stunning blow to golf. But not a knockout. It didn't take golf long to get up from the canvas—and win a clearcut victory. Yes, the grand old game is a-booming in the grand old Pacific Northwest.

How are the golf clubs? To my knowledge, only three private clubs have "died" during the past two years. Lakewood of Seattle has been converted into a housing project for shipyard and plane plant workers; Earlington, also of Seattle, is now a nursery and the once fertile fairways are covered with trees, flowers and shrubbery; Jericho of Vancouver, B. C., one of the oldest golf clubs of the entire Pacific Coast, was taken over by the Canadian government about two years ago.

Except for Lakewood, Earlington and Jericho, all other private golf clubs appear to be sailing along in smooth waters and far from the financial rocks. As a matter of fact, many, many clubs in this vast golf-minded Pacific Northwest region are in sounder financial condition right now than they were in pre-war days.

The pay-as-you-play courses did big business seven days of every week. And it's from the patronage at these courses

that one gets a clear picture that the future of the game appears extremely bright. Watching those thousands of new devotees—mostly servicemen—enjoying the fairway sport leaves no doubt. Francis Ouimet's US open championship victory of 30 years ago started the wave of popularity surging to every corner of the United States. The end of World War II will be the signal for a much bigger golf wave!

Sure, transportation restrictions affected play at quite a number of the private courses during week days, but weekends find the fairways of those far-from-city layouts fairly crowded. Close-in private golf clubs are reaping harvests these war-clouded days!

The 1942 and 1943 Hole-In-One Tournaments (nine-day affairs), held under the sponsorship of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and under the direction of the King County Public Links Assn., brought joy to hundreds of service men stationed in the Seattle area because the receipts from these popular events were used for the purchase of rent-free golf clubs and balls for the enlisted men. These sets of golf clubs and balls are housed at every pay-as-you-play course in the Seattle district. And they are all in use EVERY day!

The Victory Garden plan didn't, I regret to report, take hold in the Pacific Northwest as well as it did elsewhere in the U. S. However, some of the clubs—but too, too few—did have Victory Gardens and profited by them, too. Maybe

1944 will show a decided increase of Victory Gardens at golf clubs of the Northwest.

Red Cross work and other war charity duties kept women golfers from the fairways to a great extent, but they got relaxation from these chores by competing in club contests and city sweepstakes. And the attendances were most encouraging, too.

The big majority of golf professionals confine their club duties of weekends or just Sundays because they are working in shipyards or other war industries during week days. How's business with golf professionals? Swell! At least that's the unanimous answer yours truly gets from them.

While women's tournament golf of major importance appears dead-for-the-duration in these parts, the men folks, professionals and amateurs, have no cause to be tournament-hungry, although the majority of the six-day pre-war annuals have shrunk to weekend battles.

The richest event of the Northwest 1943 golf calendar was the \$1,500 "Esmeralda" Open staged at Downriver, Spokane, and sponsored by that city's largest world-famed Athletic Round Table, the organization that gave the universe a belly-laugh with "Bundles for Congress" gag. That two-day Esmeralda Open attracted a field of close to 150 professionals and amateurs and was won by Seattle's Harry Givan, who has a long chain of major links to his credit.

Together with doing everything possible to make golf cheap for servicemen, the men in uniform are cordially invited to compete in tournaments that were open only to members of clubs belonging to the associations sponsoring such events in pre-war days.

And to top off that good old Pacific Northwest hospitality the Seattle War Athletic Council sponsored the Pacific

Northwest servicemen's golf championship at the swanky Seattle Golf Club one Sunday last summer. It was a great event and attracted a large and star-studded field of entrants. Pfc. Louie Ferrando, stationed in the Seattle area and well known in Northern California amateur circles won. Aside from the titular test division comprised of low-handicap amateurs and professionals, there was a division for the higher-handicap entrants.

Another highly-successful tournament was the Washington State amateur championship held at Rainier GC, Seattle, and won by the entertaining club's ace, Harry Umbinetti.

The Pacific Northwest professional-amateur titular event was staged at the very testing Olympic View course in Seattle and resulted in the veteran star professional Neil Christian, and his amateur partner, Irv Cornell, representing Spokane's Downriver GC, leading the large and strong field of contestants at the close of the 36-hole test of best-ball scoring.

Jack Walters of Tacoma, fine shotmaker and exceedingly long hitter, now in the service, won the annual Tacoma open and became the first amateur linksman ever to cop that title.

Northwest and state senior tournaments were held during the year and, all in all, the men folks, young and old, enjoyed a very busy competitive 1943 year.

Looking back over the past two years it is this observer's say-so that golf throughout the Pacific Northwest has stood up extremely well along all departments and against any and all odds. And, in closing, I'll stick out my chin and predict, when Hitler & Co. finally become convinced they're confronted by unplayable lies, golf throughout these United States will tee-up and embark on the biggest popularity spree it has had since it migrated frae Scotland. Speed that day!

THIS MONTH'S COVER

Official U. S. Marine Corps photo



The Navy battles it out the American way on Yankee Bee C.C. course Sea Bee's hewed among cocconut palms and coral

rock in the war-torn South Pacific. If golf means this much to our boys over there, we back here ought to see they get the equipment they need. If you want to help, write to Golfdom and we'll tell you how.