

Miami Area Rediscovered Golf's Cash Value

By JIMMY BURNS

THANKS to an irate winter visitor a ghost golf course is to be brought to life at Coral Gables, Florida, as part of an ambitious postwar project.

The Gables lost its nationally-known Miami-Biltmore golf course, where stars used to fire birdies and eagles with reckless abandon, when the army took over the hotel as a hospital.

Only a nine-hole municipal course was left open to the public in that city. So, last January the visitor, who thought nothing of paying \$3,000 rent for a house for the season, announced that he was leaving the Gables for Miami Beach.

"I've got to be near a golf course," he explained as he bid his friends goodbye.

That set some people to thinking. They couldn't afford to lose golf-minded visitors, and the Army intends keeping the Biltmore as a permanent hospital.

The net result is that the Coral Gables CC, which has struggled along with a nine-hole course, has exercised an option to buy the ghost golf course from the Henry L. Doherty estate for \$50,000. The tract of land includes 15 holes which in the boom days was an auxiliary course to the present Biltmore hotel layout. It is just south of the Biltmore and was designed by Donald Ross, famous architect. The course can soon be put into playing condition.

"When renovated it'll be more of a championship layout than the present Biltmore course," Ned Everhart, pro-manager of the Biltmore hospital links, declared. "We used the ghost course for a couple of years. Then it went waste and later was revived as a nine-hole course."

Golf is one of Florida's chief attractions for winter visitors, but there have been times during the past winter when it appeared that some public officials were not aware of the courses' value.

Now it appears that after some threatened serious mistakes of judgment the Miami area will offer at least seven sporty courses to test the games of the vacationers.

Miami Beach has purchased a course for \$850,000 to offset loss of the Bayshore course to the Army. Its once-green fairways have been tromped down to the

sandy underfooting by the marching feet of thousands of soldiers. Its traps have been utilized as part of obstacle courses and its greens have been left to wither away.

Another threat to the future of golf came when the City of Miami considered condemnation proceedings to acquire the Miami CC course from the Florida East Coast Hotel Assn., although the club members at the same time were trying to buy it. The city intended extending a street through the course and using the remaining land as a site for municipal buildings.

A storm of protest greeted the proposal and now the club has been permitted to exercise its option to buy the land, which it has rented for years. The Country club's downtown location, five minutes from Flagler st., is ideal. This past winter 40,000 rounds of golf were played at the Country club. It has been the scene of many important national tournaments and international four ball matches.

The Miami Shores course where Willie Macfarlane, a former Open champion, presides, is conceded to be the sportiest layout in this area and after the war the club plans a \$10,000 tournament, either before or after the annual \$10,000 Miami Open at the Miami Springs course.

At the Beach the Normandy Isles course is fast becoming popular and the LaGorce and Indian Creek clubs, most exclusive of them all, continued to flourish. Willie Klein is pro at LaGorce.

Except for the winter visitors and servicemen wartime golf in Miami has been strictly a week-end proposition, so far as golf competition was concerned. The lone exception was the Miami Open which was held last December and which was won by Steve Warga, a little known pro and National Airlines radio operator, much to the surprise of the big name stars.

An amateur tournament—The Pan American Open—staged on four successive Sundays by the Junior Chamber of Commerce attracted a field of 339 entries. The tournament was won by Lt. Tommy Barnes, USNR, who used to cut quite a figure in amateur golf in Georgia.

Balls were scarce. New clubs could not be purchased. Heavy leather bags yielded

in popularity to lighter canvas ones, which were seldom to be found and kaddie carts replaced caddies, who went into defense work.

But for the youngsters and the oldsters who continued to carry golf bags the pickings were good. Caddie fee at the municipal courses was \$2 per round and the caddies carried double. At the more exclusive clubs the fee was \$3 and \$4 and if you didn't dish out a healthy tip the caddie would scorn you on your next appearance.

Some of the caddies averaged \$8 and \$9 a day and even they wouldn't work regularly. On hot days they preferred to sit in the shade of the palm trees, particularly if they had made enough in a few days to keep 'em going for the week.

Most of the clubs made concessions to servicemen, providing them with clubs and reducing the usual green fee in half for men in uniform.

At the Biltmore hospital prescription golf was introduced for some of the soldier patients and Everhart, a veteran teacher, gave mass instructions.

One flier, whose leg was broken by flak while he was on a mission over Africa, was ordered to play golf every day less than six months after his accident. At first he played only two holes a day, but gradually stepped it up to nine and now he plays 18 a day.

But to date he has found Old Man Par more of a formidable opponent than he did the Germans. But his bogie golf has helped him regain the strength of his leg and the worries attendant to the game keep his mind off his war worries.

Guest Pros Help in Club Golf Clinic

FRANK WALSH, nationally known pro of Red Run GC (Detroit district), is originator of one of the most popular events a pro can conduct for his members. It's a golf clinic in which other pros of the district appear with the host pro, give demonstrations and class lessons and answer questions.

At Red Run the event was held at 4 P.M. Sunday afternoon. Among other acts that were put on were hitting of pre-war and reprocessed balls by the pros, showing the members that the reprocessed balls were highly satisfactory for general play.

The first show lasted two hours and retained keen interest until the end when it had to be stopped for dinner. Other Detroit district clubs adopted the idea. When pros weren't performing they sat with the gallery on a bank by Red Run's

first tee and answered questions or went into more detail to help out their colleague who happened to be demonstrating and lecturing.

It's an idea that can be extensively applied, Frank says, as pros from neighboring small towns can get together, or in some cases where not many pros are available the home pro can make use of the better amateurs in giving demonstrations.

Beats Guadalcanal



Platoon Sgt. Jess Gregg (left), 19 years in the Marines, and Gunner Sgt. Arthur A. Simon (right), 18 years a Marine, both of whom were in the first landing on Guadalcanal, plan their tactics on the Parris Island, S. Car., marine base golf course.—U. S. Marine Corps Photo.

CALIF. OPENS BIG FIELD—Pro-amateur curtain-raiser of the California State Open at Del Paso CC, drew 174 entries; three amateurs to a pro. Fay Coleman-Scotty Tait team won. Amateur Ernie Pieper, with 282, six under par, led 134 in the Open field. Zell Eaton's 287 was winning pro score, getting him a \$500 war bond.

COMPOSTING LABOR-SAVER—Dominick Artese, foreman at Bonnie Briar CC, Larchmont, N. Y., made "metal mushroom" to keep compost out of cups when spreading and matting in topdressing. These are steel discs 6 inches in diameter, cut from 16-gage sheet iron, fastened to a pipe-capped piece of conduit pipe 1 inch o. d. The pipe acts as a stem, fits in flag socket of cup. Metal disc is fastened with countersunk flat head stove bolt. Disc lays flat over cup, and mat passes over same, and no dirt gets in cup, and turf edges are not disturbed. Sal. DiBuono is pro-grpr. there.—CKB.