

How We Plan Operations to Meet Wartime Conditions

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★ Frankly, things looked pretty blue the beginning of last year, faced as we were with gasoline rationing, uncertainties of the future, lack of free time, etc., on the part of our members, and we felt that the only solution to the problem was to determine as closely as possible in advance what our financial position would be at the end of the season.

This was contrary to anything that had ever been done previously, in that it was a new idea in principle, at least for our club. It had been customary to wait until the season was over, examine the auditor's report, and then look back at what might have been done had it been anticipated. As a rule the picture was not too happy a one, and the club considered itself fortunate if it broke even.

Consequently, we entered the 1943 season with a determination that if hard work and common sense could play its part, we were prepared to do it.

One of our first moves was to set up an operating budget. The term "budget" is a distasteful one, particularly in golf clubs because it is not too well understood by an average Board of Governors consisting of business and professional men whose main interest isn't the operating of a club.

However, in the final analysis, operating a golf club is no different than operating a business and consequently, we prepared our budget with great care. Not only were unnecessary and fanciful expense items eliminated, but we paid particular attention to items of income. We did not feel that the simple answer was to raise dues, and preferred to work out our operations to at least break even, or make a profit through sound business conduct rather than assessing members.

On this premise, we projected an estimated budget and income statement for the year covering the following items of expense: General, house, restaurant, bar and beverages, cigars and cigarettes, and grounds.

Also, we projected the estimated income from the following departments: Membership dues, house, restaurant, bar

and beverages, cigars and cigarettes, and grounds.

The estimates of income and expense were arrived at through many winter meetings of the Executive, Grounds and House committees when the actual against estimated expense and income were thoroughly discussed in every department.

Through this budget we were able to prove satisfactorily to ourselves what our profit or loss figure would be at the end of the season, worked out on a basis of 100 per cent membership, 75 per cent or 50 per cent. It was done in this way because we had no way of telling at the start how our memberships would be effected due to conditions.

Meetings were then planned for the first week in each month so that our actual operating expenses in every department could be carefully checked against the budget and necessary steps taken to either reduce or increase expense items according to the way the club was operating month by month.

Because of the necessity of operating on such an estimated income statement a year in advance, all committees were conscious for the first time of their responsibilities as affecting club income. It necessitated more club activity particularly member tournaments where the members got better acquainted with each other, showed up for the tournaments and diners that followed, with resultant added income from restaurant and bar business.

Once this program was rolling, the entire membership got behind the movement, and the consensus of opinion was that they enjoyed their golf more last year than they had in several previous years, due entirely to the increased activity necessitated through bringing up income and working to the budget. The membership was kept full despite the gasoline rationing, and one way or another through buses and other public conveyances, the club facilities were used to capacity.

The dining room service was naturally curtailed, but bar business increased due to having the traffic at the club and we ended the year with a profit of 10 per

cent greater than our estimate. Incidentally, this profit figure was the largest one the club enjoyed since 1929.

Naturally, after the successful pattern of operation put into effect in 1943, similar plans have been followed this year, except augmented. Committee members have been chosen, not because of their name or prestige in the locality so much as their willingness to take their coats off and go to work and stay at it for the general benefit of the club itself. In fact, I am convinced that no club can

benefit itself any more than by following this procedure of personnel selection of its committees, as it is only through cooperation, understanding and a willingness to cooperate for a common goal that the best results can be obtained.

Our membership at the present time is greater than it was at the end of last year. This speaks for itself of the general over-all value a club can receive through its reputation and attractiveness to new members, resulting from its activities and successful financial condition.

KEEP YOUR RECORDS

There's not much consolation in second guesses, but it's still not too late to apply considerable of the advice given some time ago by Charles K. Hollowell at a Massachusetts State College conference.

With all the other work a course supt. has to do this year there will be temptation to skip record-keeping that, as Hollowell points out, will be

of great value when the course eventually will have to be reconditioned. And major reconditioning is going to be required at many courses after the war.

After the war, too, there is bound to be a boom in construction of new courses. Hollowell's observations on the importance of soil condition in course site selection, should be borne in mind by those who will figure prominently in golf's postwar new construction.

JEEPS FOR GOLF?—Earl Brunner, Valley View GC, N. J., forecasts that many jeeps will be used in golf course maintenance after the war as utility trucks and for mowing where clubs can't afford tractors designed especially for the purpose and may be able to get jeeps at low prices. But with the return of golf course labor from factory jobs Brunner suspects that there'll be a lot of manual work restored in the maintenance program. He adds that postwar reconstruction of public courses is going to call for larger, flatter greens supplying plenty of places for cup replacement and distribution of the wear of heavy traffic.

IN THE ROUGH—Wm. R. Loeffler, pro who now is in New Guinea with the Army, writes: "These jungles are really rugged. Toughest rough you ever saw. I certainly would welcome the sight of a golf course now. I think back to the good old days and hope to be back at the game in the not too distant future. Give my best wishes to the fellows who are working hard to keep the game alive."

PRISON CAMP PRO—Fred Wetmore, California pro who was pro at Wack Wack G&CC in Manila, is teaching golf in a Phillippine prison camp, says Ray Cronin, repatriated former head of the Associated Press Manila bureau. Fred and others constructed a three-hole course in the camp but it closed due to lack of balls for play.

CLARE AT SOUND VIEW—E. J. Clare, 47 years in course maintenance, is the new greenkeeper at Sound View GC, Great Neck, N. Y. Clare comes back into golf after completing drill field construction jobs for the Army. Starting at Stoke Poges GC in England, Clare handled construction and maintenance at Arcola CC, N. J., Country Club of Brookline, Mass., Oyster Harbors club, Mass., and was supt. for 15 years at Woodway CC., Conn., prior to his Army work.



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