

# Practical Club Operation

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**F**IRST of all it's a good thing Herb Graffis is over in London. Otherwise this bit of literary endeavor would find its way into the waste basket. The story begins with an offer received by a club manager for a job which paid \$12,000 annually. It was made less than 30 days ago. The picture painted by the president of the club over the 'phone was really the last word.

## 'Twas a Sad Awakening

It is really hard to believe that intelligent business men who conduct their own businesses profitably can kick club investments around. As a case example, let us take this club which offered the \$12,000 salary and analyze the set-up. They have had *eleven managers in sixteen years*, which is the best answer why the club operates at a loss of more than *fifty thousand dollars* annually. The club house is excellent and the golf course is in fairly good shape considering the acute shortage of help. But, oh man!—their *financial statement was really sad*. Their income was terrific from dues, but the thousand and one leaks made it disappear.

## Help Turnover Ruinous

This club, like so many others, was being run by cliques. Whoever was in power had his own special group of friends on the committees.

Let's approach this problem of management turn-over in a cold blooded way. Take any company with its stock listed on the New York stock exchange and pass out the information that over a sixteen-year period it had changed managers eleven times and that stock wouldn't be worth five cents on the dollar. The company would be the laughing stock of the financial world and rightfully so.

Clubs must be taken out of the category of rich men's toys. Because a man operates successfully his own business does not make him a club manager. Another important point is the pretty poor job being done by clubs in the way of public relations. You might say they do not need to care. This opinion of "why should we worry about what the people think" is responsible for the attitude of the clergy in taking a well deserved crack at country clubs. Editorial writers at times refer in a "smirky" way to the country club set.

All of this can be overcome if your club renders a service to the community in a

limited way. No club should be so exclusive that it cannot open its doors to worthwhile affairs. There are always members who will put up a squawk but their little shriveled souls are definitely selfish. Please note I say that these affairs should be within bounds.

From a practical standpoint it does build membership to let the people know what you have to offer in the way of food service, etc. What does the average country club do to build an interest in golf? Without fear of contradiction one public golf course does a better job of increasing the number of players than the combined efforts of four private clubs. And right here, may I pay tribute to the "Flo" Ziegfield of Golf—George S. May, of Tam O'Shanter, who is not only an outstanding promoter, but a good showman with lots of good business sense. His activity in creating far wider interest in golf deserves the sincere thanks of all country clubs.

May I close with one more thought. During the past few years many clubs have had excellent dining room and bar business. What have you done with the profits? What is the condition of your mortgage? These are good days to get your house in order. Clubs should get away from "Committee Management" and place the entire job in the hands of a competent manager who knows finance, public relations, and the art of entertainment for members. Whenever a manager gets in back of the bar and mixes drinks he immediately gets out of the good managerial class—he should open up his own tavern instead.

## Kimbrough, Football Star, Takes to Golf

★ "Jarrin" John Kimbrough, rated by many as the greatest fullback of all time in the Southwest, has taken to golf, and according to Willie Maguire,<sup>11</sup> veteran Houston (Tex.) CC pro, is also destined to star in this sport. Maguire reports that after a two-hour lesson Kimbrough went out and shot a 100; after his second two-hour lesson an 88, and following the third instruction session he played a 77 round. All told, Kimbrough erased 23 shots in three days.