

Miami's Greenkeeper Doubles in Boats and Bunkers

By JIMMY BURNS

Over a period of years there have been times when the more sedate members of the Miami CC wished that their club wasn't just across the street from the Merrill-Stevens boat yard.

Sounds of hammering, riveting and scraping of ships' bottoms often disturbed their card games and annoyed golfers driving from the first tee. But today, Prexy Ralph Pool and his members are very happy about Merrill-Stevens being so close.

The club's proximity to a defense plant has saved it some of the labor problems faced by many other country clubs. Its greenkeeper, Ernest Felton, with the club since it was organized in 1928, decided to go into defense work. But, he chose Merrill-Stevens and his assistant went with him. They get off work early enough afternoons to attend to some of the golf course maintenance and devote their entire Sundays to that work.

Hence the Miami CC course, which is

little more than a pitch shot from the center of downtown, is in fine condition.

"We were just plain lucky," President Pool said. "We were darned glad to have Felton's part-time services and proud that he was willing to go on living in the greenkeeper's cottage on the golf course."

Pool is another of the George S. May type. He believes in spending money and keeping things in tip top condition. Pool has built up a cash reserve which the Miami CC will spend on postwar improvements. The plans for several changes to toughen the course already have been made by Donald Ross.

Pool has raised the membership dues from \$60 to \$100 a year, without a single squawk or loss of a member. The boys merely accepted his word that it was necessary because of the increased costs of labor, material and general upkeep.

Membership of the club will be frozen at 450 after the war and it is likely that the course will be closed to the general

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public. That would be a blow to many winter visitors, who have been permitted use of the course for a \$2.50 daily greens fee. But with the revenue from members the extra dough will not be needed.

During the past year more than 6,000 rounds of the 40,000 played over the Miami CC were by servicemen. They are allowed to play for a buck and as a special consideration Navy officers who get away from Seventh Naval District headquarters too late in the day for more than nine holes are permitted to play for 50 cents.

* * *

Restoration of the Miami Open to its pre-war value of \$10,000 next December was a master stroke by H. H. Arnold, manager of the city-owned Miami Springs course and originator of the tournament which for the past two years was continued as a \$5,000 event with payment in war bonds and stamps.

Arnold persuaded City Manager A. B. Curry to kick in with an extra \$5,000 for the tournament this year. That means the event will attract more of the big name players and hence will result in more publicity.

But, by increasing the cash awards, Arnold also has shown good business judgment and the tournament may not cost the city as much as it did when it was a \$5,000 event. During the past two years the entry fees and gate receipts have been given to charity, but now this income will be retained by the city. If there are 200 entries at \$10 each that means \$2,000. Presume that the attendance will be 5,000 at a dollar a head and you have another \$5,000 and a total of \$7,000.

It is entirely possible that with a big winter season in store the tournament will pay for itself.

* * *

Willie Macfarlane, who is pro, club manager and what have you at the Miami Shores golf course, is rated as the smartest golf business man in the south, according to Gene Dahlbender, southeastern representative.

"Everyone knows that few pros have better business sense than Willie," Dahlbender commented recently. "He knows all the angles and he's ahead of most of 'em with new ideas."

Willie's foresight before the golf ball famine set in helped members of his club. He is the only one in this neighborhood who has not run out of golf balls at one time or another.

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