

How Moraine Staged Pros' Greatest Event

By HERB GRAFFIS

THE PGA'S 27TH national championship, held at Moraine CC, Dayton O., July 9-15, was declared by press and players the best conducted tournament in the association's history. The event was the financial high spot of all pro championships. In addition to the \$20,000 guaranteed the PGA for expenses and prize money for a record entry of 155, war veterans' rehabilitation received \$51,515.26.

The gallery fees showed that there's a strong "quality" appeal to golf tournaments. The "season" ticket at \$6.60 covered admission to the seven days of tournament golf and two preceding days of practice and exhibitions. Daily charge was \$1.40, except for the finals at \$2.80. Men and women in uniform were admitted at half price.

The program was an artistic and financial success. The advertising in it yielded approximately \$36,000, which is believed to be the record for pro tournament publications.

Conditions of this tournament were unique. The Moraine Country Club at which the event was played is one of the most exclusive clubs in the United States. It has fewer than 100 members normally. About 75 officers from airfields have wartime memberships. Moraine's clubhouse is not large, but it is beautifully and completely fitted. Normally, such a club would shy away from a tournament because of the supposed impossibility of handling tournament guests in the clubhouse, and because of putting the course out of members' play for a week. But PGA rehabilitation fund for war veterans as beneficiary was the deciding factor. The late Clarence Rickey and an organization of Daytonians, who formerly were active in collegiate and professional sports, presented the opportunity of raising a substantial amount for veterans to the Dayton business notables who constitute the club's membership. The Moraine board, after discussions and estimates determining that the primary beneficiaries would be the veterans, got on the event strong.

A management feature of the championship at Moraine is well worth heeding by other clubs that are hosts to championships. The Moraine officials, headed by President Fred Rike, didn't work themselves into a sweat and confusion by add-

ing the job of making championship arrangements to their usual heavy responsibilities. The club department heads, William Gould, mgr., Orville Young, greenkeeper, and Tommy Bryant, pro., were told to make necessary arrangements, after consultation with PGA officials and others who had conducted major tournaments. The additional duties were delegated to men in the organizations of the club officials. Representing the general committee, whose co-chairmen were S. C. Allyn and Henry Mead, was J. K. Owen, gen. mgr. of the event, with Leigh Metcalfe as assistant. Owen's responsibility was the over-all situation. Metcalfe also handled the publicity, handled press arrangements and supervised operation of the two scoreboards. Some years ago Metcalfe was editor of Club Management magazine and in that capacity became acquainted with tournament procedure.

Other major activities were ably handled under the chairmanship of civic leaders qualified to handle operations such as ticket sales and selling organization, sale of program advertising, food and beverage supply, physical arrangements and construction at the club, transportation, parking, etc.

Col. E. A. Deeds, National Cash Register board chairman and founder of Moraine, took lively interest in the tournament planning, and the benefits of his masterly executive hand showed.

The result was that at Moraine there was none of the strain and confusion that club officials generally suffer when a major tournament is held at their club. Especially interesting and commendable was the manner in which additional patronage at noon was fed. It was buffet service with a small roast, a moderate amount of cold cuts, and plenty of non-point salads and other items very attractively displayed. The chef did a great job on beans, always a pretty fair bet with men. Contestants seldom eat heavy lunches at major tournaments so feeding them was no particular problem on points.

Admission to the clubhouse was tightly controlled, due to limitation of accommodations. Soldiers were at the doors. Orders mean orders to them and no fast-talkers with desperate pleas that "they gotta go" got by. Other accommodations were available outside. The lunch and drink tent was conveniently located be-

hind the stands erected back of the ninth and eighteenth greens.

A public scoreboard was near the tent. The scoreboard was the best seen at any tournament. Sections slid down for convenience of scorers, who had a stapling device for affixing figures on the lines of players' names. It was Moraine's conviction that a small scoreboard would be worthless for large crowds, whereas a large scoreboard would actually stimulate keen interest and progress of all matches beyond a point not otherwise possible. The new scoreboard itself was dramatic and held intense interest all throughout the day.

The scoreboard was originally planned with five panels allowing 20 names to each panel for qualifying medal play on the two days. However, the 100 names allotted proved to be insufficient and almost over night three more panels were built to take care of a total of 160 names.

Thus the board became spectacular due to its size, measuring 65 feet long by 15 feet high.

The communication systems supplying both scoreboards (outdoors and in the press room) were highly successful and they consisted of a combination of telephones and walkie-talkies. Both walkie-talkies and telephones cleared through a central table alongside the outside scoreboard. Recorders working on relief shifts made duplicate copies of all individual hole-by-hole scores on every player as the army man at the table called them out. Boy Scout runners carried one copy to the press room and the other copy to the men on the cat-walk of the big board. The result: Big scoreboard and press room recorded the hole-by-hole figures within a minute of the time called in from the scene of play.

Recapitulation of the qualifying players began with the arrival of the earliest complete day's score each day and provided for the public and press alike up-to-the-minute information on who the 32 players would probably be.

The entire communication staff, including operators on both scoreboards, was about 20. With few exceptions, the civilians in this crew were prominent businessmen and enthusiastic golfers who contributed their time. Enough help was maintained to give these men sufficient relief so that they could still see golf and keep up their working zip.

Ample parking space was not far from the clubhouse. No charge was made for parking.

The course is a rolling one with some fairly trying climbs in areas far away from the clubhouse. The elevations make it easy for spectators to observe considerable play. Turf was in excellent condition. Despite the difficult watering problem presented by billowy terrain the

fairway turf at Moraine is notably free from clover and soginess in the hollows and the turf on the knobs and ridges. The watering job at Moraine is an outstanding example of excellent engineering and expert operation.

Moraine's greens are rather large, generally, and are contoured to present many interesting problems of cup location. Especially fast greens having Moraine's type of contouring would make putting a headache and possibly call for too strong emphasis on luck at the expense of skill.

Moraine's greens are cut at night. This procedure, the pros figured, was a very smart move by Greenkeeper Young as it possibly allowed just enough growth to take a lightening surface off the greens. Furthermore, after the greens had been somewhat scuffed by a day's play the nightcutting got the grass standing up and eliminated tendency to develop nappiness. At any rate, the pros were firm in their praise of the handling of Moraine's greens, although some veteran spectators thought that the greens appeared longer than major tournament greens usually were in prewar days.

Fringes of some greens, especially on the longer short holes, were trimmed to a length about halfway between green and fairway length, providing opportunity for delicate approach shots. That certainly worked out for the contestants more happily than the longer shaggy fringes that border many greens. Short approaches out of that grass seem to be the most difficult and uncertain shots a sharpshooter has to make.

There was a decided air of class about the entire presentation. Pros and others in the golf business had lively discussions about what effect this class atmosphere had in attracting a large gate. The general tendency in wartime tournaments has been to promote tournaments by low admission prices and other methods to focus gate appeal on the masses with the objective of attracting fresh money to golf.

The tournament was particularly lucky in player transportation. The players were able to get in and out of Dayton before regulations restricting civilian travel were clamped on tight. However, those who left the tournament during its later days and who had to make train connections took a very dim view of the possibility of continuing tournaments and war relief fund exhibitions with much of a field of players who came from outside a radius of 200 miles.

Press arrangements at the tournament were excellent. The press room occupied enclosed badminton courts, that are a part of the clubhouse.

Marshalling was very well done by soldiers. Although in a few instances spec-



Lt. J. M. (Nick) Beam, midwestern coach and athletic official, who's now Rehabilitation Physical Training officer at U. S. Naval hospital, Long Beach, Cal., goes over plans for the Long Beach course with Jimmy Lawson, widely-known pro veteran. The course is 9 holes; the longest being 165 yds. It'll be a great place for wounded sailors and Marines.

tators interfered with shots because of the soldiers' inexperience in determining areas where shots might go off line and land, the pleasant and firm authority of the uniformed men kept the galleries very well in control. The galleries, though for the most part new to a major tournament, were of the golf-wise type that is fairly easy to handle.

It was necessary for every member to give up his locker at least during the two-day qualifying rounds. The Miami Valley CC and the Dayton CC extended free golf course privileges to the members during the tournament.

Getting tournament caddies was a problem. The glamor of carrying for the big boys and the special fees helped solve it. Tommy Bryant was loaned the best caddies from other Dayton clubs, and in addition made an appeal to former caddies. This resulted in many older and more desirable boys. Training for tournament caddying was in the hands of Tommy. He did a grand job.

Of particular interest to many pros was the evidence of Nelson influence on the swing. There were numerous interesting and informative discussions among the instruction authorities on the way Nelson's swing is being copied. They recalled the days when Vardon Smith, Hagen, Armour and Jones were paragons of form and each had many who attempted to imitate them.

Nelson's swing is much shorter than that of his famed predecessors, except when he is going all out for distance. Then he hauls back and gives it the works. At Dayton he was still suffering from a shoulder strain incurred at the Chicago Open two weeks prior. In winning the Chicago driving contest with a 275-yard whack, Byron slipped and wrenched a shoulder.

The opinion of keen veteran experts such as Willie Maguire, Joe Novak and Bob Barnett is that Nelson's phenomenal performance in the past two years may be

due, in a large measure, to greater firmness at impact than he formerly showed on many of his shots, as well as to his improved puttings. Maguire pointed out that Byron used to be slightly bent and loose at the knees at impact, but now he is firmly set. There were other observations that Nelson's distance, and his ability to smash for distance without trying to steer his drives, gave him a decided advantage, notwithstanding all that's said about the pay-off value of chipping and putting.

There was considerable argument among the authorities on instruction about the comparative big-time lasting capacities of the swingers compared to those whose shot-making is more of a punch. Denny Shute and Mike Turnesa, two of the smoothest swingers of the older school, got far along in the competition. Mike's fatal shot, an approach to the 35th green, was flawlessly stroked, but it was short. It was about an 80-yard shot from the left of the fairway over a deep and yawning trap. It was inches short, caught the bank and rolled back in to the sand. Nelson really whacked one off the tee on that 325-yard hole. It landed on a ridge, rolled down and tried to climb the apron of the green. Byron chipped close and got an easy three. Mike took a five, and the curtain on the show started coming down.

Mike had been favored by luck previously that round; hitting one out of bounds but still halving a hole. That is practically a miracle when the opposition is Nelson. Mike uttered the classic remark after his match with Byron. He said playing Nelson was like trying to belch against a tornado.

A committee meeting on the PGA's veterans' rehabilitation work the evening of the tournament's opening day disclosed that this work had grown into dimensions and value exceeding contribution of any other sport to wounded servicemen's help. The PGA was lauded for its performance by Lt. Col. A. Ruppertsberg and Maj. Henry Gwynn of the Surgeon General's office. A full report of the PGA job in this field is being prepared.

There was some talk at Dayton about Moraine being a possible venue of the first Ryder cup matches held in the U. S. after the war. Unless previous commitments in contract or by gentlemen's agreement have been made otherwise, the PGA certainly couldn't ask for a better tournament host than Moraine on the basis of its performance this year.

Manufacturers were active at the tournament, getting things lined up for a quick and big expansion of pro business after V-J Day. MacGregor in its home town did a hospitable job of holding open house with buffet supper in the Tourney rooms of the Van Cleve hotel.