

PRO Prominent in Coast Club's Wartime Revival

By RAY HAYWOOD

★ THE RICHMOND (CALIF.) GC, working on the theory that when you have a good thing the public should be informed of the fact, staged its first major event, a \$7500 open tournament, December 14 to 17.

Through this competition, the third in consecutive weeks for the San Francisco Bay area, the club and Professional Pat Markovich, hoped to, and did, accomplish two things, principally. They were:

1. Stimulate golf interest locally through the presence of the "big name" players and at the same time furnish a new stopping place along the competitive trail which admittedly is an important phase of golf's fight for war-time survival.

2. Launch a membership drive by providing an attraction meritorious enough to bring several thousand spectators to the scene.

The club believes that the gallerites saw the most improved golf course on the Pacific slope—a course which through sweat and thought has been worked into a condition at least 50 per cent better than when Markovich became professional five years ago.

Because of this obvious improvement, Markovich believes the gallery will be a fertile field during the current campaign to enroll 350 desirable members and then paint the notice "Members Only" over the entrance arch.

The beneficial results which followed the installation of a new pump and watering system, the seeding and fertilization of fairways and greens and the planting of thousands of trees drew considerable comment from spectators who had not visited the Richmond club for many months.

The condition of the rough, in an area noted for its long uncut, also was outstanding. It has been cleaned up until it is almost impossible to lose a ball. Nevertheless, numerous trees make it difficult to reach the greens in par figures once a shot has strayed.

All 18 tees have been re-turfed. Markovich arrived on the scene early when the Golden Gate International Exposition closed its Treasure Island run and was able to obtain enough sod to do the job. Forty-four sand traps, which were misery for the average swinger but only negligible threat to the better golfer, have been eliminated. The remaining 66 traps were remodeled in a manner which reduced

maintenance costs but increased their effectiveness as hazards.

Shelter houses have been placed on each tee and along the longer fairways. Local rain, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce to the contrary, is very wet.

Climbs Out of Red

Factors which didn't meet the casual eye included a debt of less than \$2000—as compared to the red \$61,000 the club had to combat by a financial re-organization two years ago after the membership dropped from 180 to 40.

This loss of revenue was circumvented by converting a portion of the men's locker room into a dormitory for male workers from the nearby Henry J. Kaiser shipyards. The dormitory was operated for 34 weeks—a critical period for both the golf course and the shipyards—and closed when government housing accommodations were made available for the workers. A heavy week-end play (non-members) also helped pay the bills.

Throughout this trying period—when the war-tide flowed strongly against the Allies—Markovich still managed to continue his course improvement program although he was, and still is, employed on a full time basis at one of the shipyards.

Although money was scarce, a strict rule was established allowing all men from an adjacent Army camp to use the course and clubhouse without charge. The soldiers were allowed to buy food and drink at slightly more than cost. This activity enabled the club to maintain its clubhouse staff.

Post-war plans at Richmond call for a \$35,000 remodeling job on the clubhouse and parking strip—plans and specifications have been completed—and continuation of the Open Tournament as an annual event for a \$10,000 purse.

The members' reaction to these plans is shown by the fact that 30 agreed to carry the financial burden of the tournament thereby eliminating the need of sponsorship by outside organizations. The 30 include the ten members who provided \$1000 each during the financial reorganization. Details of the reorganization were explained in the April, 1942 issue of GOLFDOM.

Richmond's population has increased from 22,000 to 100,000 since Pearl Harbor—a trend found in many other Bay area communities.