

# Houston's Golf A Civic Asset

Alert Planning Sparks Pride and Power of Texas Golfers

By **HUGH WATSON**

Golf Manager, Houston (Tex.) Memorial Park-  
Herman Park-Glenbrook Park.

★ In 1944 Houston's City championship and its War Bond were run together, the winner was declared the City Golf champion for 1944. Ed White, the former Walker Cupper, and intercollegiate champion was the winner by a large margin.

In 1943 we had 659 to enter the tournament, and this year, we had 666, all of whom did not enter match play, but as there was a War bond for the Medal winner, many who could not be here for the length of time we took for the match play, went out for the medal prize. The local newspapers say it was a world record for a match play tournament both years. We are setting out this January to break this record again.

When I started this tournament in 1943, I did not want to have a tournament that would take a man away from his work during war-time, so I hit on the idea of having 30 days in which to qualify; two weeks for the first match, two weeks for the second match, and one week for each match thereafter. No golfer was allowed to play his match during his working hours. Qualifying was on one course, but the matches could be played on any course that was satisfactory with the two opponents. The finals had to be played at the qualifying course which was Memorial Park.

We had 17 flights for men and two flights for women (32 each). One dollar was collected from each golfer. This money went to War Bonds for the winners and runner-ups; \$25 for the winner and \$10 for the runner-up. I have never asked the merchants for one thing for any of my tournaments. I believe in making our own way. Another thing that I have always done is to give the winner of the

18th flight the same value prize as the championship golfer. This has helped to swell the attendance. The Muni golfers are mostly dubs, so why not give them something to work for just as you do the better golfers. The dub is the man who keeps us in business.

My next tournament on which we are working is the Winter Municipal tournament; to be held in three divisions. Each course will hold its own separate tournament, with the winners at Herman Park playing the winners at Memorial Park of the same flight; 36 hole match; 18 at each course. The winner will get a \$50 war bond and the runner-up \$25 war bond. This offers match play competition between the two leading courses for a period of two months. Each course has about the same amount of play each month (5000) but the Glenbrook course is a new city course with small play, so this will be run by itself and will not enter in the competition between Herman and Memorial.

Bill Watson is the pro at Memorial and Robby Williams is the pro at Hermann Park. Both boys are in the Navy, and I am holding their jobs for them until the war is over. My job is manager of the three courses with headquarters at Memorial. I have been in the golf business for 30 years, but never received any pay for it until about five years ago when I took over here at Memorial as pro. I was promoted to Manager of all three courses, and my son Bill, who was my assistant, took over as pro about four years ago. I was vice pres. and sales manager for a life insurance company for 20 years, and have been on different committees for all that time in different clubs.

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**KEEP URGING YOUR PLAYERS TO TURN IN USED BALLS**

I helped build Brae Burn here, was on the Board and was also chairman of the Membership committee for 10 years. I used to play golf four times each week. Now that I am in the golf business, I don't get to play but once a month.

I have been General Supt. of St. Paul's Methodist Sunday school for 12 years. It's one of the largest Methodist churches in Texas. I went into the Golf business because I think it is one of the finest ways to build manhood. I delight in holding each year a boys tournament in connection with the Junior Chamber of Commerce. We have some 150 boys of all ages to be our guests for a week, without green fees and with clubs furnished. We have a big time each year, with large galleries following these boys.

I have prevailed upon Houston high schools to allow credits for golf this year. We have four men teams from each school, with suitable prizes for all boys. This should be done in all large cities as golf is as fine a builder of character in boys as anything I know of. I am now working on having a Fathers & Sons tournament this summer; trying to get the fathers to play more with their boys.

I know what it is to play with your sons as I have two boys, both in the Navy. Lt. Robert Watson USNR is on the

U. S. Maryland and my son Bill is a Platoon Commander at San Diego. I raised these boys on the golf course. When Bill was 17 years old, he held the course record at Brae Burn with a 65, which held for several years until we hired Jimmie Demaret as our pro and he broke the record the first year he was there. I had much rather have my boys with me on the golf course than have them running around in a car with a bunch of boys whooping it up; that they were in good clean sports. So I am for trying to get more fathers playing golf with their sons and daughters.

I know what Golf means to the average family, and I am not a nut on it either, but I have had the experience and know whereof I speak. I have 27 cups I have won in the past 30 years, and am 50 years old now. I have watched the boys who were golfers and the boys who never saw a golf course, and there's a world of difference in the later years. Many men are not interested in playing golf unless they can arrange a foursome with plenty of bets on the side. Playing with their boys and not having any bets is just not to their liking.

I am sorry that I have entered into a sermon on golf here but it shows how I feel about this great old game.

## TEAMWORK



FRANK M. WHISTON  
The surprise was on him.

The past three years have been a series of headaches for most golf club presidents and managers. One of the most aggravating problems besetting them has been

that of getting and holding clubhouse employees. More than ordinary consideration of the employees helped one club in the Chicago district maintain its operating crew with but minor replacements. At the Edgewater golf club, host to the 1944 Victory open championships, O. R. Smeltkopf, manager, has been blessed with an operating staff of rare loyalty in these days of high frequency employee shifting.

This example of faithful performance registered with the club's top man, Frank M. Whiston, who completed his two year tenure last fall as club president. As a token of his personal appreciation for their continuous service, Whiston gave a party for the club's employees at the end of the season. The affair started with golf, followed by cocktails at the club and woundup with a dinner dance at the Edgewater Beach hotel.

Here's a case where the outgoing president's thoughtfulness is bound to make it easier sailing for his successor. But the headline event of the evening was not of the host's planning. The club staff evidently thought as much of their president as he did of them, presenting him with a memento of their enjoyable relationship.