

Authorities Appraise Another Wartime Year of Golf

By **HERB GRAFFIS**

★ EVIDENCE FROM THROUGHOUT the country shows golf has strengthened itself by close adjustment to wartime conditions. Necessary economies of labor and material put the clubs in better financial condition where location would permit volume of play. Much of the reduction in expense was in respects that will have to be balanced by postwar expenditures but in many cases sinking funds have been set up to handle the inevitable charges.

Labor costs did not show the reduction that might have been expected. Wages for available labor were high due to the competitive labor market and department officials had to use old men and boys whose efficiency and performance in most cases was far from being up to the normal standard.

Great increase in national income of course was the main factor in keeping up golf play, although in many sections the increase in servicemen's play due to courses extending hospitality was a substantial element in number of rounds recorded. War workers' play was a big item. Numerous observers credited this play to the necessity of conscientious executives and factory workers balancing strenuous schedules of work which had begun to reduce physical and mental fitness after two intense years. There seemed to be about as near a minimum as could be expected of war plant absentees loafing on the courses. They're not energetic enough to get out in the air and walk around.

The ball situation became increasingly grave. A few new balls will be made this year, but all of them for military recreation purposes, mainly at veterans' hospitals where golf is growing rapidly as an effective means of improving physical and mental condition.

Lack of newly made clubs also began to figure last year as a playing equipment factor which prevented entrance of new players into the game.

Juvenile Promotion Revived

In some districts there seemed to be a fairly brisk revival of adult interest in promoting the game among youngsters.

This was not primarily because of caddie shortage and need of encouraging boys to take up bag-carrying but because of the vital importance of having the nation's youngsters in better physical condition and because of the imperative need of reducing juvenile delinquency.

GOLFDOM'S editor spent some months overseas the latter half of 1944 as war correspondent for the Chicago Times. Near American air bases in England and Scotland he saw some golf played by airmen and ground crews, but the play was uncertain due to sudden change in weather conditions controlling flight operations. A little golf was played by men attached to rear services during the time they got on leaves. That time wasn't much.

In France he didn't see a golf club or ball, although near one base there was a resort golf course. Soldiers attached to the base were too busy to get to play. Men drawn out of the line were too exhausted. The truth is—and let's don't kid ourselves—the lads who survive the blasting they take in combat much preferred to sleep, loaf or get 48 hours leave in Paris to look over the situation there.

There's considerable difference in the attitude of combat troops and men in the rear echelons toward sports news. All of them are interested in sports and want to get back to play but the combat troops have a marked resentment toward news of record sports activities at home. This attitude is especially sharp because of the policy of returning repaired wounded soldiers to limited service. The combat soldiers declare, physical condition of limited service ex-combat men is much worse than that of athletes who are rated 4F or given passes for other reasons. This source of criticism cannot be blamed on the athletes but on the policy of the armed services which probably will be revised. Certainly sports as a physical and temperamental developer has proved itself in the performance of American armed forces.

Golf came in for less of this criticism than other major sports; possibly because of the predominantly amateur angle and the belief of the combat troops, based on their own observation as ex-caddies, that

the elder amateur players were continuing in the game to keep in good war working condition and as a deserved reward for war effort. It may be that some of the combat troopers who had met or read the stuff of GOLFDOM'S editor as an alleged golf authority did not want to hurt a sensitive old man's feelings. They preferred to talk about the courses where they had played, or where they had caddied, or the stars they'd seen or heard about.

Sports Publicity Touchy

The delicacy of homefront sports problem in wartime was probably most vividly crystallized in remarks at an advanced area when copies of Stars and Stripes, the soldiers' daily newspaper, were brought up by the amazing distribution system the paper has worked out. This particular issue happened to carry a story that the pro tournament circuit would have record prize money this year. That definitely is not news of great headline or morale building quality in the minds of the young men who are under fire and wondering whether they'll live the day out. Their comments on this, the horse track betting volume, the record football and fight crowds and similar items which seemed to the lads to reflect calloused detachment from war effort, were something for sports

officials to think about more seriously.

It's a complicated and very tender subject which must be viewed realistically, and considerably more from the viewpoint of some embittered and toughened kids who don't think they are getting shot at to liberate prize money in any sport. What makes the situation especially difficult from the conscientious and informed golf officials' point of view is the great achievement of golf in promoting sale of war bonds and stamps and war benefit fund raising. The public temperament is such that the sports circuses in wartime are tremendously effective in raising war money the public wouldn't otherwise pay out in recognition and support of the efforts of men who are being killed or maimed in maintaining, among other things, the enjoyment of American sports at home in wartime.

One clear idea that GOLFDOM'S editor got for himself out of talks with combat troops was that golf in continuing its fine wartime job must increase its tie-up with war effort and allow its performance to be recorded mainly as its showing in competition to see which of its clubs and players can do the most, rather than permit itself to do any bragging about its contribution in winning a bloody war.

SECTIONAL REPORTS ON 1944

California Golf at Record Volume in 1944

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★PRIVATE GOLF CLUBS of California's southern counties, some 24 in number, which comprise the Southern California Golf Assn. have carried on despite all obstacles. The clubs of the Los Angeles Metropolitan district in particular are in more prosperous condition than ever before. Full membership lists, waiting lists and starting times necessary on many courses for Wednesday, Saturday and holiday play, are the rule rather than the exception. Bond issues have been paid off, mortgages burned and many clubs are creating reserves for repairs and rehabilitation of club houses and water systems against the time when materials and labor may become available. Clubs which dropped association membership during the depression have revived and are being reinstated.

Play has reached an unprecedented volume on both public and private courses. Interest in tournaments and inter-club team matches, the latter an important feature on our calendar, has been well sustained.

The annual championship of this Asso-

ciation brought an entry of 478 players. To minimize travel players were permitted to qualify on their home courses and scores were equalized to adjust for differences in the playing difficulty encountered by entrants. This idea, in use for two seasons, has proved satisfactory to all. John W. Dawson of the Lakeside GC, Hollywood, won our association title in finals against Bruce McCormick of the same club at the 37th hole.

The condition of the California State Golf Assn. also is very satisfactory. Sixteen clubs were added to the roster during the year making a total of over ninety.

The annual championship of the State Association held at Pebble Beach, as usual in September, brought an all-time record registration of 706 players. The state amateur championship was won by Ernest O. Peiper, Jr., of the San Jose CC, who had been the title holder in 1941. Pieper earlier in the year won the Open championship played at Sacramento.

The state event included the simultaneous play of a handicap tournament at the Monterey Peninsula CC. In 1944 we had 19 flights of 16 players; a record. The numbers attending in spite of all wartime travel restrictions were swelled by a new division of Senior golfers—100 players—who competed for two days of medal play at Cypress Point. Frank S. Lindsay, age 55, of the Riviera CC, Los Angeles, with a