

Rickey, MacGregor Head, Auto Accident Victim

CLARENCE H. RICKEY, 48, president of MacGregor Golf Inc., Dayton, O., died in the Springfield (O.) City hospital, May 19, of injuries suffered in an automobile accident two days earlier. It was the third of serious automobile accidents Rickey had been in during the past year. He had not fully recovered from the second accident but was deeply engaged in war work and would not take time for required hospitalization.

Clarence was one of the most widely known men in the golf business and was warmly admired by the many hundreds of pros and amateurs who had the good fortune to know him. He was a genial, strenuous and canny character who'd go far out of his way to help a fellow who needed help, and to work for the good of golf's cause far beyond his own and his company's special interests.

Rickey had recently climaxed a career of distinguished service to golf by selling the game as a rehabilitative measure for war veterans through the Office of the United States Surgeon General. Following through in that accomplishment he then conceived and developed in his company, a plan for emergency production of the needed equipment, and, at the time of his death, was deeply engrossed in planning tournaments and exhibitions through which money will be raised to help finance the rehabilitation program.

Oscar Willoweit, sales representative for the MacGregor organization, with whom Rickey was riding, is recovering from minor injuries. He was thrown clear as the car struck a guard rail and rolled over to crush Rickey in the wreckage.

A native of Chicago, Rickey was once president of the Medinah CC. He first won prominence in the sports world as a semi-pro baseball player in the early 20s. It was through baseball that he became identified with the sporting goods business which lead, in 1934, to his becoming sales director of the former Crawford, MacGregor, Canby Co. of Dayton, and, within a few months, general manager of the organization.

In 1936, when the company was absorbed by Sport Products, Inc., of Cincinnati, Rickey became president and general manager of MacGregor Golf Inc.

Typical of his initiative and ingenuity was his plan for producing golf equipment for convalescent service men. MacGregor Golf Inc. was given a contract for



Clarence H. Rickey
1897-1945

this production despite the fact that all facilities had been devoted to turning out war goods since 1942. Many of the skilled workers had found employment elsewhere and were frozen in their jobs.

Upon Rickey's invitation, and assured by him of the contribution they would be making to the welfare of wounded veterans, those working on day shifts elsewhere agreed to report at MacGregor at 4 p.m. and to work "until too tired to go on." Similarly, night shift workers agreed to make clubs for the veterans during the day.

Even this help was insufficient and several golf professionals, branch managers and salesmen were recruited. Machines were set up in about one quarter of the space formerly used and, without disrupting or curtailing war goods production in the plant, thousands of sets of clubs were turned out.

The cause of the veteran was very close to Rickey's heart. He was a veteran of World War I who enlisted the day after that war was declared. That enlistment interrupted his plans for an education at Northwestern University, but after the war he studied accounting and business administration in night school.

Of his baseball talents Rickey admitted

that he "was not a very good fielder, but that his boss kept him on because he could hit." He carried that hard-hitting talent with him into the business world.

Rickey was responsible for the staging of many benefit matches in the Dayton area and throughout his career has been a close friend of many of the nation's outstanding professional golfers.

Al Clark, sports editor of The Dayton Journal-Herald, in his story of Rickey's death, described him as "Dayton's walking encyclopedia of golf." Clark wrote further that "Rickey's ability as the manager of a company engaged in the manufacturing of sports equipment was just one of his many traits. He knew golfers, could spot 'em when they were diamonds in the rough and under his aegis develop them into top-flight professionals."

Rickey is credited with having discovered some of the outstanding golfers of the day.

Funeral services for Rickey were held in Dayton on May 21 and at Oak Park, Illinois, on May 23, 1945, with burial at Elmlawn Cemetery in Elmhurst, Illinois.

Pallbearers for Clarence Rickey were Harry Adams, Jimmy Hines, Alex Cunningham, Jerry Glynn, Chuck Tanis and Charlie Penna.

Rickey is survived by the widow, Alice, and a son, Robert, who since his release from the army has been associated with MacGregor Golf Inc.

Henry P. Cowen, of Dayton, first vice president of the organization, who has been closely associated with Rickey since 1936, has been appointed general manager of MacGregor Golf Inc.

FREE GOLF —

MAYBE NOT FANCY, BUT IT'S FREE

BETHANY (Mo.) had a population of 2,682, by the 1940 census. It's probably smaller now with many of its boys away at war.

Maybe some of you fellows at the clubs in bigger places wouldn't think much of Bethany's golf course. It's only seven holes and only five greens, and a lot of you probably would scream to beat hell and want to can the greenkeeper if your tees weren't in much better shape than Bethany's greens.

But the Bethany fellows who played that course before they went to war liked it, and thought about it when they were a long way from home. They wanted the course kept.

So a few of the older fellows who were left at home did what the kids wanted. And how they did it! Especially Jake Caster, the club president.

The story about the Bethany course which the Bethany Republican ran is a piece we're going to print just to remind some people how lucky they are to have well-kept big courses in wartime.

The head on the story stopped us. It read:

**"NO CHARGE FOR GOLF;
ENOUGH MONEY LEFT
TO MAINTAIN COURSE"**

And here's the story that shows you one extreme of American golf:

"The golfer's dream is here.

"Also, if there had been any doubts whatsoever that L. J. (Jake) Caster is a peerless golf president and canny financial manager, they now are wiped out.

"For Caster, who in the first place runs the affairs of the club on a budget that, if it were composed of \$5 bills, could be tucked into a pocket wallet without bursting any seams, now has arrived at the

ultimate in money-handling efficiency and has announced that golf this year will be free at Bethany.

"No dues whatever will be collected, and Caster thinks the possibility even is remote that any collections of a few dollars from each member will have to be made before the close of the year.

"Some funds were left over from 1944, and Caster estimates that this will be enough money to pay for gasoline used in mowing, and for incidentals. The tractor and mower owned by the club both are believed to be in good condition. No rent for the course is charged by the city, which, in turn, is allowed the use of the club's tractor for some of the city street work. Caster, who is able as a mechanic, not only supervises the maintenance of the machines, but also donates his services in running the tractor for mowing. Occasionally he has some other volunteer aid from members in general maintenance work.

"The same seven-hole playing arrangement will be followed this season that was arranged for the 1944 season. This covers the south half of the course, east and south of the city lake, and utilizes the same greens in two instances. Caster estimates that he can keep that much of the course mowed.

"Some members of the club who are in uniform overseas have been writing home urging that the course be kept up this season, and it is plain to see that they hope they may get to return from Europe before the end of the summer, even if only on furlough while passing on to the Pacific area.

"Under the no-charge plan, everybody is welcome to bring clubs and balls to the course, and join in the play."