

# Improvement Committee Directs Old Club Modernization

By **WILLIE OGG**

(Albany (N. Y.) CC)

Many of the fine older golf clubs are face-to-face with extensive jobs of modernization that no longer can be postponed.

The materials and labor required aren't available yet but the club that hasn't organization and plans for this required work are letting pass an opportunity for a revitalization that will protect it against serious slumps when the wave of new and improved courses begins to sweep toward its crest and a new generation of golfers that doesn't place high rating on venerability must supply the inevitable replacements of a golf club's membership.

The procedure at the Albany CC is proving so decidedly successful other distinguished older clubs may benefit from our experience.

The Albany CC was incorporated in 1897, and like most of the older clubs, its golf course is what might be termed old fashioned. Punch-bowl greens and elevated tees were much in favor during the early period of golf in this country and Albany had more than its share of this type of construction. In addition to this

there seemed to be a yen for blind shots and instead of using the valleys for the lay-outs the up and down hill route was taken.

As may be expected in construction of this type, there were many problems of upkeep. The punch-bowl greens would winter-kill and much hand labor had to be employed on the elevated tees. Hill top fairways would dry out rapidly and even with power equipment there was a mowing problem as well as a fertilization problem.

Our first consideration was to eliminate stiff climbs, the blind shots, the old fashioned bunkers and drain the punch-bowl greens. In time these greens will be remodeled so as to insure a more usable putting surface. We are planning to use the valleys as much as possible, and, where it was impossible to get around the hills, we created a valley with bulldozers.

The membership favors the elimination of blind shots and hill climbing more than other things that we have done. Our first hole used to have a high hill in front of

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## New Course at Marines' Largest Base

This is view, from alongside 6th tee of U. S. Marine Corps' recently opened course at Camp Pendleton, Oceanside, Calif, the world's largest Leatherneck base. Sierra Madre mountains are in background. Lt. Gen. Holland M. (Howlin' Mad) Smith, who led Marines in some of the toughest Pacific fighting, drove the first ball. Pfc. Chick Yarbrough is pro. Course is tough going but the gyrenes are used to that. The new course already is getting heavy play.



the green at the end of a natural valley with woods on each side of the fairway and in back of the green. This hill blocked the view of the green. The hole measures 350 yards and the average player's second shot would be stopped by the hill. By removing this hill and continuing the valley as far as the green, plus traps on the side and back, one of the finest starting holes in the country was created from one of the worst at not too much expense.

This is a sample of what can be done at a minimum of expense and of what we are doing and intend to do on every hole. We do not seek to make a championship course in the strictest sense but rather a course that the membership will be proud of, pleasant to play and just tough enough to be sporting.

From an up-keep point of view the new construction is so designed to permit the use of power equipment. This phase of the work does not appear on the surface as far as the average member is concerned although this is a vital factor with the management.

The Albany CC suffered during the war years, like most clubs, through man power and equipment shortage; so much so, that they had to discontinue the use of its 9-hole course which was used for practice and the overflow from the 18-hole course. This presented a rather unsightly appearance and spurred the officials to action perhaps sooner than would have been otherwise.

Under the able direction of Vice-President Dwight B. La Du who, incidentally has done more for golf in New York State than any other individual and has been highly honored for his work (among the honors being an honorary membership in the North Eastern New York PGA), a 5 year plan was drawn up for modernizing the clubhouse and golf courses. Mr. La Du was supported by the governing body composed of up and coming men with an eye to the future. The dues were upped and the increase earmarked for the new work which comes under the heading of the Improvement committee.

This 5 year plan is a model of modern management. There are no standing committees. The Improvement committee is one man, Dwight B. La Du, Mr. Ralph Wagner is the Green committee and Charles Nichols is the House committee. They and other chairmen are members of the Board of Governors headed by Pres. William C. Bolenius. Should a special problem arise that calls for special work, a committee is formed of men specially skilled in whatever work that has to be done. On completion of the work the committee dissolves automatically.

Competent management is the result of this plan of La Du's and it would be well for clubs in general to consider this

new phase of operation. Personally, I would rather run a golf course with this set-up than through a committee, although great care must be taken in the selection of the one-man committees. The operation of this plan hinges to a great extent on the knowledge possessed of the job to be done as I can think of nothing worse than a chairman who does not understand the operation of the department he heads.

## HAZARDS THAT ARE WOEFUL WASTES

Hazards are frequently constructed on golf courses with the sole object of further punishing poor shots. This is in defiance of a cardinal principal of golf architecture, which sets forth the proposition that features which affect a well hit shot have a greater bearing on play than those which merely punish errors.

Poor shots punish themselves by loss of distance, by unfavorable position for the next stroke, or by difficult lie. That feature which demands calculation of slope, trajectory, carry, placement and personal ability, and which, properly negotiated, gives due reward is of positive value strategically and mechanically.

Moreover, elements introduced to influence the play of low handicap performers usually do not increase the duffer's woes, as they are out of his reach and away from his safe and simple route.

—William B. Langford

**JACK CAMPBELL RETIRES** — Jack Campbell who came from Troon in 1910 to join one of his clan at the Country Club of Brookline, Mass., and later went to the Philadelphia district, has retired as pro of Old York Road CC, where he has served since 1910. Jack's salary at the club continues. E. F. Quitner, pres., Philadelphia GA and Old York Road greenchn., says, "Jack has done more to make Old York Road a fine country club than any other person. He's now an honorary member of the club. Jack developed many star amateurs, men and women, among them Mrs. G. Henry Stetson, women's national champion in 1926. In his earlier days he was a fine player. He was fifth in the 1903 National Open and won the Philadelphia Open from a great field that same year."