

# Over-Crowding Problem Confronts Small Clubs

By EDDIE BAGGETT

The much-heralded golf boom already has caused complications at Monoosnock CC, Leominster, Mass., which will be faced by hundreds of other golf courses throughout the country.

The difficulty stems from the age old law of supply-and-demand. Monoosnock, a compact, 9-hole course, one of the most beautiful in central Massachusetts, simply isn't large enough to accommodate all the post-war golfers who have thronged to the course.

During the recent war years the club, by competent management and good promotion, built its average attendance to new all-time highs. Now it faces a dilemma with returning servicemen and women eagerly taking up the game again. Many golfers have also had no time for golf in recent years because of exceptionally long hours in war production work.

A full month before the season opened 40 new memberships and reinstatements had been granted. But the club officials are not worrying about regular members. The course can accommodate them.

Monoosnock, like the majority of small clubs, has depended on recent years for the greens fees of transient golfers to stabilize its budget. It has gone after this trade with tremendous success. Now that success threatens to boomerang.

Three weeks before the official opening 178 golfers made a bee-line for the links to get in a few rounds. And 178 golfers on a nine-hole course on one Sunday afternoon means jams on tees, fairways, and greens like another Dunkirk in miniature.

## Howls from the Crowd

About half of the crowd, roughly, were members. Immediately a howl of indignation arose from them. They had become members to play golf, not to wrestle their way around a course like a giant preparation for a nylon-line!

The transients on the other hand also protested. They had paid their greens fees (higher than last year) to play golf.

Club officials went into a huddle pronto. What was to be done? Someone suggested restricting the course to members. Doing that, however, would mean scrapping something for which they had labored earnestly, and successfully, for almost a decade.

Advertise the situation and ask golfers to stay away? No, that goes against the grain of good businessmen for it just isn't sound policy. Perhaps the time will again

come when country clubs will need golfers and more golfers.

At this writing a definite solution has not been put into effect but a germ of an idea has been found and development is under way. It's simple and it helps both golfers and club.

The only thing to do, besides expanding to 18-holes of course, is to limit the number of golfers on the course at one time.

Monoosnock has 7 long holes and 2 short. The long holes can accommodate 3 foursomes at one time; tee, fairway, and green. Two foursomes can use the short holes at a time. That makes 25 foursomes, or 100 golfers making the rounds at one time without crowding and permitting maximum speed without pressure.

Only foursomes will be permitted, at least when the links are full. Errol Richardson, Monoosnock, mgr: is planning to double as a host and make a special effort to introduce all golfers and form foursomes at the first tee.

What about those that will have to wait? Here the real innovation begins. The club will build its clubhouse into a deluxe waiting room with lounge chairs, reading material, and games. The waiting golfer will be pleasantly entertained and the club anticipates a sharp jump in receipts from its snack bar and 19th hole.

For years too many smaller golf clubs have neglected their clubhouse facilities, always a hidden source for revenue.

Richardson believes the future of golf is tremendous. He declares that everything should be done to please and encourage more people to take up the game today as conditions now are most favorable to the foundation of a boom on a permanent basis.

Of course Monoosnock's temporary solution is not the real answer to the problem of today's crowding. That can be had only when material and labor are available to build more, bigger, and better golf courses. But until then, over-crowding is definitely something that must be wisely handled by clubs or large numbers of currently enthusiastic golfers will lose interest in playing.

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**TULSA SUPTS. REORGANIZE** — Greenkeepers of Tulsa, Okla., met recently at offices of D. B. Bell & Son, to reorganize their association which suspended during the war. It's planned to make the association state-wide and to affiliate with the NGSA. Leslie Hare is pres., and Bob Irvine, Oaks CC, is sec-treas.