

# Bag Cart Big New Factor in Golf Business

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After about 60 years of the boy-borne golf bag which was a comparative late development in the game the bag cart has brought another innovation with considerable bearing on the business side of golf.

In the first place the bag cart is definitely increasing the golf market. Its reduction of caddy fees cuts costs for many who could not afford golf, especially at the prices caddies now get in most communities. Furthermore, use of the cart by smaller boys is a factor influencing most players to have along with them their full complement of clubs rather than discard clubs of a set to make the load easier for a lad. Beyond doubt this practice of leaving clubs in the pro shop or locker when a caddy shortage either meant no boy or a small youngster, had the possibility of crystallizing into a trend for reducing the number of clubs in the customary set.

Also along this line must be considered the increasing objections of child-health authorities and child labor authorities who looked in alarm at the heavy loads immature caddies were carrying. It must be frankly granted, though, that the main factor accounting for the remarkable advance of bag carts into nationwide popularity was the absence of caddies rather than the caddy aid provided by the carts. California's pioneer status in establishing the cart as a customary item of golf was unquestionably caused by the short twilight during many months of the 12-month playing season in that state. By the time youngsters got out of school and were available for caddying there often wasn't time left for 18 holes of play. Hence, if the player couldn't get an older caddy he was compelled to carry for himself.

Swiftly then, in California, the bag cart attained social status as its use was not entirely dependent upon economy but, at the wealthier private clubs, upon utility, labor-saving and convenience. An interesting sidelight at private clubs has been the popularity of the bag cart with women golfers who may not want caddies around to curtail the free speech or to afford possible embarrassment to players having quite high handicaps.

## Balance Is Studied

Problems of terrain, ease of handling by the player or caddy, weight distribution

and other design factors to protect turf, all were matters that had to be given thoughtful consideration in achieving correct design of cart. The National Cart staff, in conjunction with pros and greenkeepers, made extensive experiments before arriving at sound principles of design and construction. There is plenty of rugged terrain on southern California's courses providing tests for balance that assure easy handling of the cart down and up valleys without dumping the clubs.

Weight distribution to minimize wear on turf also had to be thoroughly worked out and we believe we have done much in this direction although admittedly the popularity of the carts has resulted in traffic patterns, around greens and tees especially, that have to be considered in course architecture and maintenance. However such wear at these points also is evident from foot traffic so the cart traffic instead of bringing an entirely new problem has spotlighted a problem long in need of attention.

Naturally the most rapid expansion of the cart use has been at public and resort courses where the California popularity of the device spread to fill a great need. Seldom do resort courses have enough caddies available, regardless of what the patrons are willing to pay for caddy service. And at the public and semi-public courses where more than 60% of the nation's rounds of golf are played each year the caddy expense factor restricted use of the boy bag carriers.

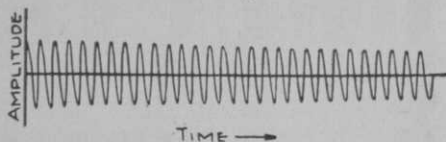
## Carts Big Revenue Factor

Revenue from bag cart rentals and sales, according to National Cart Corp. surveys, this year will be well into the multi-million dollar class. Numerous cases are reported of cart rentals accounting for public and private courses being able to offer propositions attracting first class pros to the jobs, and even more cases are recorded of courses financing needed improvements with cart rentals.

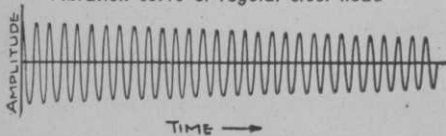
It still is too early to determine whether rental or ownership of the carts will be preferred by the majority of golfers. At present the convenience and small cost of rental is what most golfers endorse but sale at pro shops indicates, in the National investigation, that the trend toward private ownership is mounting rapidly. In

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working out the Tag-A-Long lines for 1947 the National people had to make provisions for both classes of use. For both fields, of course, the matter of standing up under abuse had to be among the major elements of design and construction. Care of expensive bags while in the carts also was an important factor considered.

The rental use involved traffic problems that compelled the manufacture of one model that can hold 4 bags, if necessary.

### Cart "Garaging" A Problem

One of the problems brought on by the tremendous and quick increase in use of bag carts has been that of storing the carts with utmost convenience, economy of space, protection and ease of supervision. By comparing notes with pros and caddy-masters and by pioneering experiments of our own we hope to get the right answers.

At present the usual method is to have the carts in a shed and protected about in the same way long used for the protection of caddies' bicycles. Rubber-covered chains and locks are used. "Floater" insurance obtainable at low cost covers the carts against theft or fire loss.

Some idea of the amazingly rapid and great growth of bag cart business occurs to the pro as he recalls how long it took for the matched-set idea to catch on with golfers while the bag cart swept to national popularity in about 3 years. Further indication is in the National backlog of more than \$1,000,000 in unfilled cart orders for delivery early in the 1947 golf season.

**FOUR ACES IN A YEAR**—George E. Stephens, member of Lakewood CC, Denver, Colo., where Gene Root is pro, played golf for 16 years without getting a hole in one. He made up for lost time by getting 4 last year; 3 on the 110 yd. 7th and one on the 121 yd. 11th. Two were made in Feb., 4 days apart, one on Oct. 17 and another on Dec. 27. He had to buy drinks for everybody in the clubhouse after making each ace but as he belongs to the Lakewood Hole-in-One club and received 50 cents from each member he grossed \$84 and came out ahead.

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