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Golf Business Moves Toward Wartime Basis in 1951

By HERB GRAFFIS

The situation of golf in the national defense emergency is still indefinite except in the case of Department of Commerce National Production Authority amended order M-4 prohibiting construction work costing more than \$5,000 on golf courses, clubhouses, driving ranges and swimming pools and tennis courts at country clubs, and a plea is being made for revision of that order.

As considerable of the golf course construction work planned and in progress is for public courses and will serve as a conditioning and recreation factor the American Society for Golf Course Architects is endeavoring to secure modification of the M-4 order. The architects' case is based not only on the physical and psychological service of golf for armed forces, defense workers and general public but on the fact that amended order M-4 specifically excludes as "commencing construction," "site preparation such as excavation, grading, filling, laying down driveways, walks, . . . work sheds and construction shanties, laying pipes, conduit and wires outside of the boundary lines of the walls of the structure." Landscaping is not mentioned in the order.

The architects reason that by using secondhand pipe, particularly from oil wells, and by using crushed stone instead of drain tile in greens construction, use of critical material will be avoided. Use of crushed stone for green drainage is not new and some course superintendents consider it superior to tile. Art Hall at Kansas City recently has employed crushed stone in a way which other superintendents in the district regard approvingly.

Club and Ball Situation

Another factor in the course construction picture is that of installing new courses or improving existing courses in smaller towns to fit in with decentralization of industry and construction of new atomic energy projects.

At date of writing this (Dec. 23) no

restrictions have been placed on use of materials in golf balls and clubs and production is continuing at normal rate. Rubber use for golf ball production is only a spit in the ocean compared to over-all national rubber use. Moderate stockpiles of shafts, heads and grips are in most club-making plants and some new material is being received. Prices on shafts and heads recently have increased.

There is the possibility that transfer of labor to meet defense materiel manufacturing requirements will cut golf goods production but that seems to be some months off.

It looks now as though the buying rush on balls particularly, late last summer, was unnecessary. Current manufacturing programs ought to supply the market adequately this year.

One thing that's happening may be painful for a time to some pros but eventually will benefit them by making them more judicious in ordering. The day-to-day prospect of having club manufacturing curtailed makes manufacturers shy about accepting orders from pros who turn the clubs back when they discover they have over-ordered. Manufacturers generally are too diplomatic to come right out and say that the pro competitive situation is weakened by the practice of not considering a club order a firm order that must be paid for with cash in the same manner stores handle their orders.

We've never believed in bulling the boys and making it necessary for the younger pros especially to have to learn the facts of life from the birds and bees. GOLF-DOM's long and insistent campaign for putting pro credit on a high basis has been successful and has been the foundation of the success of the pro-only lines of merchandise. Now conditions plainly point to studious ordering and smart merchandising to move quickly what's ordered. Until that's almost general in pro golf and the

practice of returning goods in lieu of cash payment is virtually eliminated pros are playing into the hands of stores, particularly during this defense emergency. Now manufacturers must watch their production schedules carefully and can't afford to tie up capital and take a chance on liquidating returned goods at a loss by cut-price sales to stores that buy on firm order. Those cut-price liquidation sales have cut into pro sales at the start of many seasons. Sales of store-line clubs over-produced the previous season didn't nick pro sales volume much but when the pro-grade returned goods hit the market at reduced prices then the pros bled.

Thus the prevailing situation in tending, if not compelling, to make all pros order carefully and buy firmly, seems due to effect an improvement in a soft spot in pro merchandising practice.

Military Training Tie-ups

Present indications are that there will be between 3½ and 5 million young men of the most active golfing age in military service. Already a program is under way to increase golf training facilities at military installations. National Golf Foundations material is being supplied to commanding officers of all military training installations and special material at the suggestion of military authorities is being outlined for supply as circumstances dictate.

The lesson of the Korean war is beginning to be heeded in military training. Plans now are emphasizing training and conditioning for fighting, instead of joining the armed services to get some special education, travel, and play with the broads in occupied areas. That alluring program has resulted in too many casualties, as was pointed out by the late Gen. Walton Walker.

Now there's going to be stiffened programs of training at military installations which means less recreation time away from training centers and more accent on recreation that will attract all lads to using their legs, arms and heads instead of sitting on their fannies and letting the other guys get the exercise. Golf fits well into the sports participation program.

Also to be accented under present conditions is the junior golf program at clubs, high schools and colleges to reach the boys and girls before they have to devote a large part of their time to military training. George Lake's committee of the PGA for junior golf promotion, and the National Golf Foundation, are collaborating on speeding up and extending junior promotion this year.

Another PGA committee, the War Service committee, headed by Joe Devany, also is active in planning supply of golf instruction and exhibition personnel to military

installations. The contemplated program has the enthusiastic support of the PGA's Tournament committee. It'll mean that some of the pros will sacrifice money, exhibition dates and convenience to work free at camps, but in view of the very high percentage of pros with military service records in World Wars I and II it is a sure thing that this golf pro work at camps will be a stand-out job in sports.

The PGA is going at this responsibility with a highly commendable horror of strutting, ballyhoo, and taking bows which other sports organizations have done while playing as usual during wars in which runty, skinny little kids with thick glasses somehow got tapped by draft boards and proved to be great combat soldiers, if not celebrated athletes. Tommy Armour's ironic statement, "Let's do something to pretend we're grateful for not being shelled," pretty well expresses the sentiments of the pros.

The pros, in common with most other Americans have practically puked at the case of one so-called sport having as its champion of a year during which American kids were being killed and maimed in Korea, a fellow with a conspicuous case of gang-plank allergy when World War II was on. This representative of sport recently picked up a reported \$45,000 net for a month's pastiming in territory won by the blood and battling of American kids. The news of this athlete's fat haul appeared the same day as the news of a 20-year-old Pennsylvania kid losing both arms and legs in Korean fighting.

That sort of thing and the race track mobsters putting on war "charity benefits" with the cash coming from the public and not the horse track characters is in sharp contrast to the pros' and greenkeepers' performance in war causes and the pros and greenkeepers want to keep it that way.

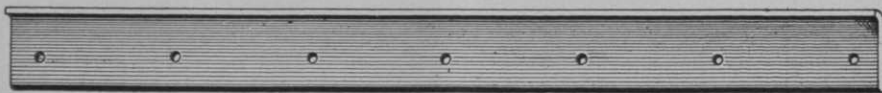
Another very important phase of golf's activity while war's on is in connection with the veterans' hospitals. The American Women's Volunteer Services, with Mrs. Helen Lengfeld and Patty Berg steering, have made excellent and comprehensive arrangements for extending golf programs at vet hospitals which have had facilities provided by district golf associations, pro and greenkeeper organizations. Clubs are beginning to adopt the plan of the Richmond (Calif.) CC which has extended to Korean war vets in neighboring vet hospitals an opportunity to make free use of the Richmond course, Monday thru Friday, exclusive of holidays.

Course and clubhouse labor and pro shop assistant hiring already are beginning to reflect defense employment requirements.

Among other indications of changing golf to meet defense and wartime labor

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The influence of the Scottish golf links on world golf course architecture by Philip Mackenzie Ross is an interesting presentation of the genius and luck of the unknown pioneer Scots who matched the terrain to the strategy of the game and allowed development of hazards at places where the ordinary Green committee would want hazards eliminated.

Robert Trent Jones has an excellent chapter on Golf Course Architecture in the U. S. which refers particularly to the new Peachtree course at Atlanta. Trent Jones was the architect of this course, working with Bob Jones. The adaptation of the Scotch influence as expressed when the late Dr. Alistair Mackenzie and Bob Jones collaborated on the Augusta National course, to the Peachtree course is especially worthy of study. Gentler greens contours and allowance for numerous significant placement of cups are two of the factors at Peachtree representing departures from the Augusta type.

Golf Courses Overseas by C. H. Alison and a chapter by T. Simpson on The Design and Construction of a Golf Course point out some differences between British and American practices. The Simpson material emphasizes soil conditioning and drainage and the appearance of naturalness. Simpson says that much of the construction work today is reconstruction but does not tell about the greater use of mechanical earth handling methods and the design-construction consideration of re-

duced maintenance costs as the American reader would prefer.

The Sutton material on the Formation and Upkeep of Golf Courses and Putting Greens shows difference between British and American practice. The illustrations are many and informative. Differences in terms are somewhat confusing to the American reader but the illustrations often clear away the confusion. These 100 and more pages alone make the book one the American greenkeeper will want in his business library.

A chapter on Golf Club Management of special value to the British type of golf club, a delightful introduction by Bernard Darwin, a bibliography and an appendix of tables complete the useful book.

GOLF CLUB BUSINESS MOVES

(Continued from page 22)

conditions are plans of many clubs to install night lighting at practice tees as it is believed many players with crowded work schedules can make good use of the night exercise and recreation.

Public and fee course operators are wondering if the defense production schedule will stagger the off-days instead of having the customary Saturday and Sunday off-days. It was found during World War II that staggering off-days kept up plant output and reduced absenteeism. It, of course, would be desirable to spread the load on recreation facilities.

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THE GREENS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF ALL SUCCESSFUL GOLF COURSES.

National Industrial Conference Board recently completed a study in which it was found that a six-day, 48-hour week represents the best standard for efficient war production. Manpower shortages in wartime made labor efficiency and productivity matter of major concern. The Conference Board reported that analyses made by the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics indicated that the six-day, 48-hour week was most productive for wartime, but the schedule might not prove equally as productive in peacetime. The study also found that when workers had no control of the speed of the work, output increased in the seven-day week, but so did spoilage, sickness and absenteeism.

N. Y.-Conn. Group Sponsors First Turf School

The N. Y.-Conn. Turf Improvement Association in conjunction with the N. Y. State College of Agriculture and Extension Service, sponsored the first Turf School in this area. The two day session in October, arranged by the association's education committee of Ed. P. Brady, N. Y. City Parks; Alex L. Edgar, St. Andrews; Joseph Flynn, Metropolis; Frank Malara, Knollwood; Doug L. Rankin, Westchester CC, and A. R. Twombly, was attended by

more than 230 turf people from N. Y. and surrounding states.

The program that was developed included such notables as Drs. O. J. Noer, John F. Cornman and J. A. Adams. Drs. P. P. Pirone and John C. Schread discussed the



O. J. Noer, Milwaukee Sewerage Commission, addressing the N. Y.-Conn. Turf School using colored slides to illustrate his talk.

disease and insect problems. Mr. Gene C. Nutter, Chan W. Baker and W. R. Craig together with Rev. B. L. Massee filled out the panel of excellent speakers whose topics covered everything from crab grass to Labor-Management problems.

On display were numerous species of turf weeds, turf insects and several of the newer strains of turf grasses. The school met with such interest and enthusiasm that another is planned for in 1951.

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