

Golf Programs Demand Pro Planning NOW

By HERB GRAFFIS

Pro-managers who sat in the country club round-table sessions at the Club Managers' Assn. of America national convention in Dallas heard a lot about how special parties get and keep club members and push up club income. But managers who also were pros noted that no comment was made on the wisdom of accenting the golf program.

This omission of reference to the golf programs struck the pros as a sharp reminder the pros had better be doing to the golf programs what the managers are doing with the social programs. The managers brought out the fact that the committees can't always be depended on to arrange and publicize the parties to success but, in most cases, the manager has to keep diplomatically pushing when he doesn't wind up doing most of the job himself.

George Calderwood of North Hills, Milwaukee, Wis., disclosed in a GOLFDOM article last year the significant discovery that members of a representative first class private club played an average of only a few more than 20 games of golf a year. That makes golf per game cost too much for a lot of the members. The swimming pool for the kids and the parties for the older people—and the teenagers, too—therefore become major factors in keeping club members.

Tax Push on Golf

The managers at Dallas forecast that the tax situation and other effects of the defense situation would be adversely reflected in clubs unless the clubs pepped up their appeal with unusual events. Members get tired of the same old program repeated year after year. The golf program, in many clubs, suffers from the same annual monotony as the entertainment program.

Generally the complaint of golf committee heads is that they don't have enough of a budget to put on an attractive schedule that'll bring into fair competition members of all grades of golfing capabilities. If that actually is the case the budget can be raised as one of the best investments the club can make in increasing house revenue and keeping members sold on their memberships. How-

ever, it's often the case that the committee doesn't do its job.

There's where the pro's organizing and executive ability has to come into play. Either he has to get the committees to work effectively or do the work himself and let the committees think they do it. Some of the managers at Dallas related that they found large entertainment committees most valuable as, in such cases, members of the committee could take charge of various events and compete in seeing which event was the greatest success.

It is a sure thing that pro income, as well as entire club revenue, is in exact ratio to the amount of play at the club. Nothing else increases golf play among men, women and junior members as much as lively competitive programs. An indication of that is reflected by the large annual demand for the booklet "Golf Events," a free booklet furnished to pros and club officials by the National Golf Foundation, 407 S. Dearborn, Chicago 5, Ill. Many of the events listed among these suggestions for competitive events are for giving a prize-winning chance to the duffers who seldom get anything from the club except bills.

One thing that was emphasized during the managers' discussion was that the publicity campaign on the events can't be confined to mere mention in the yearly calendar or one announcement just prior to the event. There's got to be some circus publicity with two—and sometimes three—publicity mailings on the events. Even if the publicity doesn't always score in bringing out big fields it keeps the members aware there's a lot going on at the club and subtly reminds that many of the community envy the members' chance to get in on the program.

According to the managers this year is a critical year for cementing members onto the roster and preventing an unduly large turnover. That means the pros will have to give more attention than ever before to the golf competitive programs at their clubs and the pro whose committee hasn't already planned the golf season for operation in high gear had better look into the situation and get it corrected for the good of the club and his own business year.