

"Spring Training" Opens Campaign for More Play

Ted Woolley, president of Golfcraft, Inc., is chairman of the Sports and Pastimes committee of Butterfield CC in the Chicago district. As a golf club manufacturer and an official at a first class club he gets an accurate close-up on the need of promoting more play at golf clubs as a first requirement of clubs, manufacturers and pros.

There won't be any marked increase in the number of golf courses for a while;



"Spring Training" night staged at Butterfield CC, Chicago dist., under the direction of Sports and Pastimes committee chairman Ted Woolley (top row, second from right) to get golf play off to an early start had an all star cast of golf talent and other sports celebrities on the job. Among those present were: (top row, L to R) Herb Graffis, Golfdom editor, Bob MacDonald, teaching professional, pres. Barnhart of Butterfield CC, Woolley, Bill Gordon, Ill, PGA pres., (Bottom row, L to R) Joe Kirkwood, Sr., trick shot artist, Joe Kirkwood, Jr., Shirley Spork, Golfcraft advisory staff, and Butterfield professional, Dick Grout.

that's certain with government restrictions now applied. The private clubs in metropolitan areas are nearly to capacity of membership. There is a shortage of public and fee courses in several districts. With limitations of golf facilities in areas where there are the most people the problem, especially at private clubs, is that of encouraging greater use of facilities.

The broad statistical picture of golf is shown by the latest carefully compiled estimates of the number of active golfers (those playing at least 20 rounds a year) and the number of rounds played. These figures were determined for 1949 by GOLFDOM with the National Golf Foundation

and the cooperation of private, public and fee course officials. The figures reported are shown below and on the accompanying page.

Figures for 1950 are not yet available as in many cases they're not compiled at courses until spring and returns can't be secured from the cooperating clubs until the rush of opening the season in the central states is out of the way. Early indications are that the 1950 increase over 1949 exceeded 5% and may have come close to 10% with the playing weather having been rather good.

Figures from the Card

Woolley figures that in the cases of the private clubs there is ample room for increasing play by establishing a quota of three more rounds per year per member. That will amount to a very worthwhile increase in play at the private clubs and reduce the members' cost per round which is an item some members are going to examine thoughtfully in periods when net income may be diminished. The average of rounds played by men, women and juniors at 18-hole private clubs in 1949 was only about 16 and that could stand plenty of an increase without taxing the capacity of the plants.

Of course golf play is dependent on weather but not to the extent most people realize. The improvement in drainage at

Number of Golf Players in U. S. Year Ending 1949

At Private Clubs:

Men	710,000
Women	200,000
Juniors	78,000
	<hr/> 988,400

At Fee Courses:

Men	628,300
Women	153,000
Juniors	57,000
	<hr/> 838,300

At Public Courses:

Men	895,000
Women	207,000
Juniors	182,000
	<hr/> 1,285,300

Total for the U.S.	3,112,000
---------------------------------	------------------

**Number of Rounds of Golf Played
Year Ending 1949**

— On 9-Hole Golf Courses —

Public 9-Hole (Ave.)	19,246 rounds or Total for	416	8,006,336
Daily Fee 9-Hole (Ave.)	10,266 rounds or Total for	656	6,734,496
Private 9-Hole (Ave.)	5,931 rounds or Total for	1,920	11,387,520

— On 18-Hole Golf Courses —

Public 18-Hole (Ave.)	35,090 rounds or Total for	327	11,474,270
Daily Fee 18-Hole (Ave.)	21,112 rounds or Total for	426	8,972,600
Private 18-Hole (Ave.)	13,342 rounds or Total for	1,225	16,343,950

Total **62,919,172**

golf courses, the maintenance practice of clearing away leaves in fall and the great improvement in comfortable weather-proof golf apparel make it possible for golf to be enjoyed in northern and central states throughout a longer season. About the only time when a course should be out of play is during bitterly cold weather, or when the course is covered with snow or when the spring thaws make it inadvisable to play on regular greens. In the latter case temporary greens can be played.

Woolley maintains that failure to develop more use of the courses and clubhouse facilities is the fault of the Sports and Pastimes committees. They often muffle the job of stirring up golf interest to bring the golfers out early after a winter indoors in the central and northern states. This winter may be interrupted by a golfing vacation in the south or southwest but there's no reason why it shouldn't be ended as early as possible by steaming up early golf play at one's own club north of the Mason-Dixon line, Woolley declares.

So, as a test of his idea, Woolley and his committee team-mates staged a "Spring Training" dinner party at the club. The first one of these affairs, which are to be scheduled annually, was very well attended but not as well as the committee had hoped, for the reason — later discovered — that some members just couldn't realize it was going to be an all-star golf show. But the dinner did get big play started earlier than usual at the club and got week-day play out when weather permitted, rather than let the season's play coast in on the usual week-end pattern.

Woolley got Joe Kirkwood, Sr. and Joe, Jr., and Shirley Spork of his own staff putting on instruction sessions and shot-making demonstrations in a net put up in the club lounge. Joe, Sr. presented his trick shot show. Dick Grout, Butterfield's pro; Johnny Revolta, Bill Nary, who now is assistant to Babe Zaharias at Skycrest and Bob MacDonald also gave instructive performances with Bill Gordon, president of the Illinois PGA as ring-master. Other sports celebrities — Johnny Lujack, Jack

Manders, Ray Apolskis and Gabby Hartnett — were introduced, as was young Joe's charming wife, Cathy Downs of the movies. Pres. Barnhart of Butterfield, Woolley and other club officials briefly outlined plans for club activities and got across the idea that always needs to be emphasized in club operations — that the club is a place to enjoy oneself often instead of being a place thought of as where a fellow and his family may spend too much money.

Locate Displays in Shop Traffic Paths

Orville W. Chapin, pro, Ft. Wayne (Ind.) CC says that too many pros may beat themselves out of sales and discourage customers from seeing and examining goods they need, by putting the displays against walls instead of where they'll be in the path of traffic.

Chapin tells of his own shop:

"I build a rack or stand, 15" square with tray or base shaped octagonally, to display putters, wedges, etc. The top rail is notched so that clubs won't slip sideways. I use the hollow inside for displaying umbrellas. This rack is placed close to front entrance, right in the line of entering traffic. It tripled my sale of clubs.

"I also put a good looking table with sportswear displayed on it and where customers would come against it. It was amazing to see how many members would handle and buy the merchandise. These same people, 9 times out of 10, would resist being shown merchandise even though they showed interest by looking towards cases with the same merchandise under glass.

"Another job I do is to check over club storage racks for sets which are obsolete or not well fitted to the player. I get plenty of leads for business from this."

Use GOLFDOM'S BUYERS' SERVICE
When You NEED Supplies — page 77
