

From Caddymaster to Owner— Syron Is A Businessman

By JOE GRAFFIS

Frank Syron is a golf businessman who started in the roots of the business as caddymaster at Olympia Field CC (Chicago dist.) when that club was new and had as its president the famed football coach A. A. Stagg. Frank was one of the early ones to make caddy enlistment, training and management a specialized business and did so well at it he has to his credit a lot of fine young businessmen who began their careers as rookie caddies of his, and a pioneering record in many of the caddy management methods that now are standard practice at the better clubs today.

In 1921 Frank went to Bloomfield CC (Detroit dist.) as caddymaster and was there for seven years in that capacity and as an assistant on the professional staff. He went from Bloomfield to Orchard Lake CC (Detroit dist.) where he was pro for 13 years. By that time Frank qualified as a fellow who knew the golf business pretty well and regarded it as a field in which money could be made.

There came a chance to buy the Pontiac (Mich.) CC, which was about 4 miles

from the center of town, and needing the sort of promotion and management that Syron was confident he had. With Frank as the pro and the promoter of golf interest and his wife, Elizabeth, managing the clubhouse and keeping keen eyes and judgment on the financial details of the entire operation, the Syrons soon found themselves owning a good semi-public 18-hole layout.

The Pontiac club was bought by Frank in 1941 and despite the war upsets the purchase price was paid off by the end of 1945. Much of the explanation of this remarkable quick payment lies in the way that Frank fitted the club into the industrial recreation picture. Pontiac has considerable industry and in the area factory and office employees were working at high pressure. Maintenance of the workers' health, efficiency and general morale called for the sort of recreational facilities the Syrons made available at the Pontiac CC.

Golf league play was organized along the lines of bowling leagues. In the summers there are five evenings of twilight



The new grill at Pontiac (Mich.) CC provides the semi-public course player in the community with a facility usually enjoyed only by private club members. The drape-covered windows overlook the practice putting green.



play with some teams starting on the first tee and others on the 10th. There are morning leagues playing Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The large volume of individual play and the league play are managed by Frank and his asst., Ken Martin, so all play proceeds smoothly and quickly without conflict and the course is kept at high earning capacity without appearing discouragingly crowded. That achievement alone tips you off to how good Syron is as a golf businessman.

There are 24 night-lighted practice tees that use the course fairways as a range. This is another popular recreation asset for the Pontiac golfing public and profitable business for Frank. The night lighting encourages players to practice and improves their games, hence their eagerness to play. Frank says it's one of the very valuable promotion features of the operation. He says that certainly, before long, many other private, public and semi-public courses will install facilities on the order of this Pontiac CC lighted range and find that the installation is well warranted by service to players and by extending the earning hours of the investment.

In improving the club facilities so semi-public course players would have attraction rating with those of many of the better private clubs, the Syrons installed a new grill room and pro shop at one side

and to the front of the existing clubhouse. The construction was started in the fall of 1950 and completed by mid-season 1951.

The new grill, with a bar on one side, and the club dining room, can seat 200 and often are filled to capacity. Sunday mornings there usually are more than 100 in the grill having coffee and ham and eggs and other breakfast items supplied by the snack equipment at the bar.

The new pro shop proves what Frank long has maintained; that golfers now rate a first class pro shop as an essential of any club that intends to correctly serve its players.

The attractive drapes in the grill room were made by Mrs. Syron who put material of the "Grandma Moses childhood home" pattern alongside the 13 Thermopane windows. Windows of the grill overlook the practice putting green.

Experts from a Grand Rapids showcase company helped Frank plan his shop. The layout gives large stock ample and inviting display. Lighting is especially good. The ceiling fixtures are flush, and cases, shelves and club displays are magnetically bright. All leading lines of clubs are on display. Frank says that when leading lines are shown together the prospective buyers get the strong urge to have top class merchandise and will settle for nothing less. The price difference, per round played, between the first class mer-



chandise and the stuff sold on price alone isn't enough to keep the players away from the top merchandise, Syron has found.

The apparel and bag display rack in the center of the pro shop is worthy of study. It sells goods. Another interesting detail of the Syron shop is the "punch board" display of accessories which can be seen at the far end of the shop (to the right of the overhead heat outlet). This is composition material into which display hangers are pressed and altered in location as the merchandise is changed.

Flooring is $\frac{1}{2}$ in. rubber-composition tiling which has shown no signs of wear thus far, although traffic has been heavy.

The accompanying picture of Frank's shop was taken from the entrance. Notice that the ball counter and cash register are at the back so the traffic in the staple that's most sold must come deep into the shop.

There has been \$80,000 invested in these new improvements and because that \$80,000 has been spent where the Pontiac CC players will get superior service you can bet that the investment will pay the Syrons a good return.

USGA Reports Findings of 1951 National Crabgrass Trials

(Coordinated by USGA Green Section)

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In the year 1951 research workers and manufacturers of herbicides unanimously agreed that there was a need for a National coordinated crabgrass trials. The herbicides selected by most were phenylmercuric acetate, potassium cyanate, and sodium arsenite.

The National Coordinated Crabgrass Trials included these three individual series of trials:

1. **The Early Series.** The first herbicidal application was applied when the crabgrass seedling was in the 2 to 3 leaf stage. Then two additional applications for a total of three were applied at intervals of 7 to 10 days.

2. **The Late Series.** The first herbicidal application was applied when the seed-head emerged approximately 1 inch out of the boot. Two additional applications were made at intervals of 7 to 10 days.

3. **The Early-Late Series.** The first three applications were made at the same time as the Early Series. Three additional applications were made, at the same time as the Late Series; thus, combining the two series.

Each series was set-up in a Latin square design, replicated 4 times.

The rates of application for each herbicide were as follows:

(a) phenyl mercuric acetate (10%) at 5 pints to the acre

(b) potassium cyanate (91%) at 8 pounds to the acre

(c) sodium arsenite (90%) at 1 pound to the acre

1. There is a best time and a best set of conditions for the use of each of the herbicides tested.

2. Under most conditions, PMA affords the best control of seedling crabgrass. On bermudagrass turf any of the three chemicals effectively control seedling crabgrass with three applications. Residual properties appear to be of less importance in bermudagrass turf as bermudagrass, if given a slight edge, will fight its own battle against crabgrass reinfestation.

3. PMA appears to be the safest herbicide of the three tested (at these rates) when soil moisture conditions are below optimum.

4. Where more than three herbicidal applications are made, all chemicals materially reduce the crabgrass population. Other factors, such as cost of herbicide, effect on permanent turf grasses, ease of handling, and toxicity to man and animal, should be weighed carefully before a choice of an herbicide is made.

5. Potassium cyanate and sodium arsenite appear to be the most efficient on mature crabgrass.

6. Soil moisture is an extremely critical factor when considering the use of sodium arsenite as injury to permanent turf is more severe at low soil moisture.

7. Each herbicide applied at the rates used in these trials can be used effectively in thinning-out the crabgrass population. Proper management practices can then enter the picture, to help the permanent grasses to fight their own battles against crabgrass.

8. Chemical control of crabgrass must be considered in its proper perspective, as a useful tool which can be utilized along with good management practices on the proper types of permanent grasses to provide better and lasting turf.

Summary and conclusions were obtained from a combined statistical analysis of results obtained by workers from the following states: California, Kansas, Indiana, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Texas.

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