

How Lamboley, Pro-Supt., Made His Job Grow

By ROBERT MOONEY

Meshingomesia CC at Marion, Ind., like many other golf clubs, has experienced ups and downs during the course of years.

Possibly its best break happened in the spring of 1931 when Clarence Lamboley suddenly appeared as the club's new pro.

After 21 years, Lamboley is still there. His hair, once black, has a silvery white look, matching the smoke from his ever-burning pipe.

Any chance of him leaving Marion is somewhat remote. He has turned down four better offers. Each of these gives members jitters.

Members took cognizance of possibilities that Lamboley might leave a few years ago. Such chilling thoughts brought quick reaction. Funds suddenly appeared for a new house. Complete with breezeway and garage, the comfortably furnished white bungalow sits near the clubhouse separated by a driveway and fairway.

As an extra dividend, the pro and his wife received life memberships to the club. Now each October, a Lamboley Stag is held with the faithful pro receiving many fine gifts.

Life hasn't always been as smooth. Lamboley could not have picked a poorer time to arrive. As everywhere, depression gripped Marion in 1931. The club, practically on the mortgage block, had but 200 members. Many of these were ready to forego such luxury until better times.

But things got worse. In 1932, Clarence struggled along on a \$200 salary. The salary jumped to \$350 each of the next two years. But he hung on.

The young man's early persistence stemmed from his background. Clarence and three brothers grew up under the shadows of the Ft. Wayne CC. Clarence graduated from the caddie ranks to caddiemaster under Tom Cahill.

Incidentally, his father, Joseph, 86, and mother, Dora, 84, still live in the old home. The name Lamboley is French derived. Those possibly still living in the Belfort sector of France go by L'Ambole or L'Amboley. The pronunciation (Lahm-bow-lay) is far prettier than behind-the-back snickers of "Lam-baloney", vocally exercised by young players and caddies, in-

cluding four Mooney boys, during the pro's early days.

Wife Is Team-Mate

Clarence first jumped from Ft. Wayne to Escanaba, Mich., where he married an Irish girl named Virginia Rockwell, a fine representative of that grand group of helpmates, the pros' wives. When the shop is short of help she will cheerfully and ably clean clubs, manage caddies, and runs the shop when Clarence is giving lessons, out of town or working on the course.

They have a son, Eddie, now a sergeant in the Air Force at Romey Field, Puerto Rico. He'll be 21 in November.

From Escanaba, Clarence moved back to Ft. Wayne, helping Chester Nelson at Orchard Ridge.

When the Marion job opened, Lamboley grabbed it... whether he knew what he held onto isn't quite certain.

Lamboley's consistent plugging, despite financial worries and hard times, earned him a permanent niche in Marion. In later prosperous years, a minority with big ideas entertained thought of hiring a playing professional. This sudden impulse was quickly, but firmly, squelched. Members admit their pro gets little time to play golf at home and his yearly tournament experience is practically nil. But they quickly point out his ability to keep the course in top shape, his teaching and golf goods supply services and his constant energetic, pleasant and expert promotion of golf interest makes him the most valuable kind of a man for the club.

Old timers recalled a long line of predecessors, some good and some not so good. One flash quickly departed without a formal "good-bye, been swell, hope to see you". Reason later was discovered. Flashy Boy apparently emptied the two-bit golf ball slot machine before his sudden exit.

At clubs that can afford to pay two men for two exacting jobs the course superintendents and the professionals all have more work than they have hours in the day for the work but at a club such as Meshingomesia where the finances dictate one good man in the dual capacity of superintendent and professional he

must be forever on the alert in seeing that his responsibilities are handled in sound balance and that no part of his job is neglected.

Makes Use of Turf Research

In taking advantage for his club of every possible chance to improve operations Lamboley works closely with Purdue university and makes full use of the expert services of Purdue's golf turf experts and the knowledge of other superintendents he meets and talks with at the annual Midwest Turf Foundation meetings and short courses at Purdue. This utilization of authoritative outside knowledge has paid the club richly. Clarence has applied a valuable combination of his



Matt Garland (L), pres., Meshingomesia CC, Marion, Ind., was 10 years old when Clarence Lamboley (R), the club's pro-supt., came onto the club job.

own skill and experience and that of others in turf maintenance in maintaining his course in excellent condition, acting as adviser on lawns to many members and in maintaining experimental plots at Meshingomesia.

This past summer's plague of turf diseases damaged but one green to any extent. It was Number 5, a par 3 hole, the only green Lamboley hasn't rebuilt on the course.

The Marion club now has comfortable assets, and required \$100,000 operating expenses in 1951, a far cry from Lamboley's early days. In one year of improvements, \$50,000 was expended for plumbing and \$25,000 for electrical improvements. The club's crowding membership (now 400) required a \$40,000 parking lot.

Still a 9-holer, Meshingomesia's rolling hills and short flats are tougher since Lamboley changed the entire course (except one hole). Likewise, 500 yards were added. Tees were set back. New greens were designed and built. Hackers don't object to extra yardage on the eighth

hole. But the new green there brings out the crying towel. It offers testing contours. The normal guy willingly settles for two putts.

Lamboley experienced a red-faced moment on this hole last summer. Louise Suggs, playing an exhibition, thought a long iron would get her on the green in two. Lamboley hinted maybe a wood should suffice. Miss Suggs chose the wood. She missed it, all right. She carried over.

Despite long layoffs from playing, Clarence isn't taken often. Recently, a few of the gang, thinking he might be rusty, encouraged him into a foursome. The old pro (he's really only 52) smoothly went out in 33.

Making Members Happy

"The pro-greenkeeper's job calls for attending to a lot of detail that must all add up to just one answer: keeping the members happy," says Lamboley.

"I think the most important point in keeping members happy is maintenance of the course. With the course in good playing shape everyone is delighted. Naturally, this takes plenty of extra work but it surely pays off in the long run."

Lamboley declares that the worst risk the pro-greenkeeper runs into is that of getting into a rut. "Try to learn something new each day. Do things that aren't normally asked of you," he advises.

As to the human element: "Keep individual members likes and dislikes in mind. See that nothing happens to upset their games if you possibly can help avoid it. Be honest and fair in all dealings. A smile or greeting doesn't hurt either."

For lively events, Lamboley runs off six club championships a year ranging from the girl's junior to the President's Cup (handicap for men).

Winner of the Field Swezey Memorial is regarded as club champ. The club also holds the annual Knights of Columbus versus Shriner's match, the professional's tourney (lawyers, doctors and dentists) and the Calcutta. In the latter handicaps are knocked down with each successive bid.

Although the club collected ample finances for a huge remodeling program during years of the slot machine craze, Lamboley is relieved by their removal since enactment of Indiana's anti-slot machine law.

"The slots caused too much trouble and anxiety among members. Since they've been out, we've learned to stand on our own feet," he said.

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