

"Spring Training" Golf Is Plan the Game Could Use

By CHARLIE GRANT

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AS another season opens in the central and north states the professional sees his members rush out to recover from a long winter of indoor living. Year after year we see these men and women with the same old bad golfing habits that we know we can cure and have yearned to treat.

But when the weather's good the members want to play and they don't have much time or inclination for lessons and practice. We in pro golf all know from experience that the better a member plays the more he plays. It's to our own interest and even more important than that, to our clubs' best interests, to have more and better golf played.

More members are going on winter vacations than ever before. They play in the sunland and come back with just about the same games they've always had. The story is the same; no teaching of the correct golfing habits and no practice. Contrasted with these observations are experiences many of us have had in teaching indoors during the winter and seeing some satisfactory development of golfers who have to stay north in the cold and snow.

As we always keep wondering how we can do better by golfers there may come to us the idea that our members have six months for play and about six months' golf inactivity so we can't expect much progress athletically among men and women who are not at the best years of muscular response.

Is there an answer to our puzzle about what we can do to improve our members' golf? I believe there is.

Simply expressed, the answer is "spring training trips" to the clubs.

Golfers' Situation Illogical

The baseball, football, hockey and basketball clubs, with professional or amateur athletes supposedly in fine physical condition consider pre-season training an essential, but the golfer who spends the winter indoors and generally in sedentary work comes out to play a game that calls for some physical conditioning and finesse and

goes to the first tee with no more than a few practice swings. The situation is illogical and merely because it's something to which golfers have been accustomed there's no reason why professionals should allow it to continue without exploring possibilities for greater service to our members and clubs.

Before our courses are open for play with caddies available, or when the spring thaws make use of the course unwise, the spring training camps could be set up with permanent or portable shelters and kerosene or electric heaters to make golfers comfortable.

The spring training may be a good way of getting our assistants trained too. Often assistants are not worked much until along in May then we have the job of training them so they will be most helpful to our members. We've got the assistants on the payroll but for weeks before the season gets under way they're not doing the members, the pros or the assistants themselves nearly as much good as is possible.

This spring training would be a good thing for the health of our members as well as for arousing more interest in club affairs. After a winter indoors a member generally needs some mild exercise to shake the winter lead out. And as far as training in better golf is concerned, we'd have the members close to us and not worried about getting off the tee and deep into the syndicate matches. How many times have pros watched a member shoot off the first tee and said to themselves "If I only could get that man for ten minutes and show him how to hold a club and stand up to the ball!" But you don't want to make any suggestions when the member has a match.

The courses where there are no practice ranges could greatly increase their value to members by having a spring training shelter put up by the first tee. A man in the clubhouse who could serve sandwiches, coffee and other drinks should far more than pay his way.

The idea, I believe, has great possibil-

ities in making avid golfers out of spasmodic players and would do quite a little to make the club more useful to members; something that must be considered in these days of rising dues and operating costs.

Improving Sales

And as for pro sales it seems likely that when a fellow gets out for the spring training and sees promise of a better game he's going to be in the mood to buy new clubs. What pro hasn't looked at his members' clubs and thought that if he could just get some members to hit a few balls with clubs that fitted them much better than the clubs they now are using golf would be a different and more attractive game? In the spring training shelter a prospective customer could try out clubs without damaging them.

The professionals as promoters of golf and as men responsible for the fullest enjoyment and value of the game to their members will do well to study the possibilities of the spring training idea. Club officials who are seeking new ideas to increase the interest and value of the club also will find the suggestion worthy of consideration and action in time to give

the members another attraction next spring.

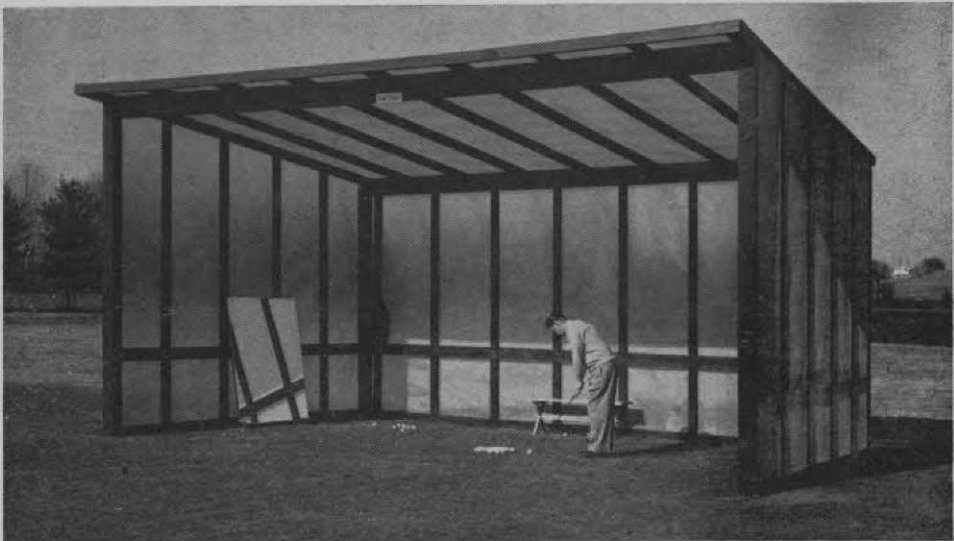
This past winter there was much more winter golf play in the midwest than during any open winter previously. It was a plain indication of growing recognition of businessmen that golf is a great thing for offsetting the unhealthy confinement of winter. But even at that it's only the hardier ones who want to walk around the course in the bracing chill of winter. The spring training in a comfortable shelter would be much more to their liking, and there they could be taught better golf under the most favorable conditions without the competition of the course and the rest of the foursome calling to get out and get going.

Western GA Conducts Caddie Forum

Western Golf Assn. will conduct a forum of caddie masters at Morrison Hotel, Chicago, April 20, at which matters of caddie recruiting, training, supervision, facilities, rewards, transportation and other subjects will be discussed.

Clubs are urged by the WGA to send caddie masters. Full details from Western Golf Assn., 8 S. Dearborn, Chicago 3, Ill.

OUTDOOR PRACTICE WITH INDOOR COMFORT



Bill Moran, professional, Concord CC, Wilmington, Del., practices under "shed" built for members who don't want the weather to interfere with their winter and early spring practice. Built of DuPont "Cel-O-Glass", a plastic coated wire mesh product, over wooden frame, the 24 ft. by 15 ft. structure although not completely transparent lets in plenty of light and heat but keeps out rain, wind and the cold. Idea for the new shed developed from a recent luncheon discussion by a group of Concord members headed by Grounds committee chairman F. S. Wilcox, Jr.