

## Consultants Suggest Three-Stage Program for Club Expansion

Undoubtedly there are numerous medium size country clubs scattered throughout the U.S. that have reached a crossroad. Whether emphasis should be continued to be placed on golf, probably as was originally intended, or whether it should be expanded to put equal stress on other activities, is a matter that is often debated.

The suggestion that other activities be extended almost invariably calls for expansion of or addition to present facilities. In practically all cases this means renovation of the clubhouse, the possible building of a pool and the addition of such outlying buildings as a pro shop or perhaps a maintenance or general service structure.

When the time comes that club officials or membership committees get down to facts on the expanding of activities of a club, they are faced with questions such as these:

- Is the financial structure of the club adequate to sustain an expansion program and, if so, to what extent?
- What is the reaction of the membership as a whole?
- What effect will expansion (or failure to go through with it) have in 10 or 20 years?

### Not Doing The Job

A club in an Eastern city of about 75,000 population recently called in Scudieri and Mankey of Manchester, Conn., architects and sometime club consultants, to survey its facilities and make recommendations for possible future expansion of activities other than golf. Early talks convinced representatives of the consulting firm that many, if not all, of the members were concerned with the fact

that the club was not doing the job it should and could do in other than golf activities. It was quite obvious that a family type of operation was wanted, and there was quite strong underlying evidence that the members thought their club was lacking in what they termed "social expression". In reference to the latter, persons who belonged to the club felt that although they had an exceptionally fine golf course there was an overall lack of facilities and activities that engender pride in a club as a whole. The general appearance of the club also was disappointing to some.

The initial survey of the club property which, because there was general satisfaction with the course, was centered on the clubhouse area. The clubhouse was situated in an excellent location, but unfortunately there was little room for future expansion. Recently added parking space had encroached on ground that should have been set aside for adding to the clubhouse. The entrance to the building was from a side from which all the golfing activity emanated, and opposite one of the lockerrooms was the caddy yard, which not only detracted from the overall appearance of the club grounds but through no particular fault of the caddies, was a source of irritation to the members.

The lockerrooms were totally inadequate and the pro shop was only about one-third as large as it should have been. For the 300 men and 100 women players there were only 72 lockers in the men's dressing room and less than 20 in the women's. The pro shop with only 600 square feet of space should have contained at least 2,000. Space in the shop for storing bags was practically nil with the result that they were largely kept in a corner of the

men's and women's lockerrooms. As for cart storage space, it literally didn't exist.

### More Than Adequate

On the other hand, Scudieri and Mankey, found the restaurant and general clubhouse facilities more than adequate. The dining room, in conjunction with the mixed grill, was probably too large and rarely used to capacity. The kitchen, it was found, was more than adequate from the standpoint of food preparation, but lacking in storage space. The lounge was more of a multi-purpose room and, considering the size of the club, was too large to be used as an informal gathering place.

The clubhouse's front entrance, considering the preoccupation with "social expression", was too drab. It was also decided that because of odd size windows at the rear of the building, the club wasn't taking advantage of a fine view over a nearby waterway. Finally, little use was made of the rear of the building for the construction of terraces and patios.

After making its survey, the consulting firm came to the conclusion that the club in question actually was in good position to expand its social functions because facilities for doing so were quite adequate. It already had a relatively new and large enough swimming pool — probably the first requirement for converting a club to a family-type operation. As a third-stage step in the development of the club, Scudieri and Mankey recommended doubling the area of the ballroom and converting a porch area to a youths' lounge. The latter was to be located in direct proximity to the pool.

### Improvements Needed Here

As it turned out, the golf facilities, exclusive of the course, were more in need of overhauling to lend prestige or status to the club than the clubhouse appointments. As a first-stage improvement, the consultants recommended the building of a pro shop in the vicinity of the 10th tee and 18th green. It was to be large enough to increase the sales display area, provide adequate storage space for at least 500 sets of clubs in anticipation of further growth of the membership, and it was to include a small lounge. The consultants estimated the building could be constructed for \$13,000.

Second-stage development called for enlarging the lockerrooms and adding 750 square feet of space to the front of the clubhouse to improve the appearance of the entranceway. The women's lockerroom

was to be enlarged by combining it with the old pro shop area, while the men's lockerroom was to be expanded by annexing space from the mixed grill. Locker capacity there was to be increased from 72 to 300, while the 20 or so lockers formerly located in the womens dressing room were increased to 100. The estimated cost of enlarging the lockerrooms and refurbishing the front of the building was about \$20,000. Decorating of the dining room-grill area and the lounge also was included in this figure.

### Total Expense — \$50,000

The third-stage improvement, previously described, was to cost approximately \$15,000, bringing the total expense of renovating the clubhouse and its environs and bringing them up to the expectations of the membership to \$50,000. However, the consultants strongly recommended that the club set up a contingency fund of between \$10,000 and \$15,000 over the \$50,000 to make allowance for any unforeseen developments in its improvement program.

The recommendations of the consulting firm were generally favored. The club has indicated that it is ready to go ahead with the first stage of the renovation program. There is, of course, some objection by a small part of the membership to spending from \$50,000 to a possible \$65,000 in toning up the appearance of the clubhouse and there probably will be some dropouts as a result. In spite of modest initiation fees and relatively low dues, the club is in a A-1 financial position, having no indebtedness whatever. Its operating costs are considered to be very reasonable. The club probably will have no difficulty in obtaining an improvement loan.

Scudieri and Mankey are of the opinion that the club in question in addition to converting to a family-type operation, improving its facilities and appearance and aspiring to a higher level of "social expression" is enhancing its value. The club is located in a metropolitan area and if only routine effort is made in keeping up the property, its value will easily double in 20 years. If it is sold at the end of that time, there is no reason to believe that the club won't realize enough from the sale to finance elsewhere a completely new course, clubhouse and other facilities at little or no cost to the membership. This is an important thing for any club — small, medium or large — to keep sight of when the expense of making improvements is being weighed.