

# Who Can Extend the Golf Season?—The Pro Shop Staff

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**I**t has always puzzled me that each fall after Labor Day hundreds of country club members all over the country who have been avid golfers all summer long, suddenly stop playing. If weather were causing this it could be understood, but in the Midwest, for example, the fall season is unusually pleasant for golf.

We, of course, realize that fall renews many activities of social clubs, charity work and the like. We also realize that we're in a university town, the home of the University of Illinois, and that fall means football with all its attendant activities.

It is obvious that members stop playing golf because other things capture their interest at this time. So the problem is clear cut — if golfers are kept interested through the fall months, they will find the time to get out and play golf.

## Regular Season Service

After watching play fold up early each fall in 1959 and 1960, we initiated a number of steps the following season to draw golfers to the course during September, October and November. First, we saw to it that "regular season" service from the pro shop was as readily available in the fall as it was in the middle of July. With the exception of our bookkeeper, we maintained our full staff right to the end of the year. I, myself, started to play each and every day up to Nov. 1, and even after when weather permitted. That was quite frequently.

It has always been my feeling that the men on my staff can give good service only if they are interested in golf. So it is logical to conclude that they must have the opportunity to play in order to build this interest and to enable them to become acquainted with and interested in members' games. They have little time to play in the strictly seasonal months. But they have been able to play frequently during the fall months the last two years because we

have maintained our shop staff at full strength.

## Playing Record Kept

As a matter of fact, last season (1962), just for our own information we kept a record of the number of rounds our staff was able to play and it went something like this: Assistant Pro, 152 nine-hole rounds; Shop Supervisor, 146 nine-hole rounds; Club Storage and Repairman, 69 nine-hole rounds. It's obvious that this would have been impossible if only a skeleton staff were maintained during the fall months. However, our men work a long, hard schedule through the season, and the chance to play in the fall keeps their enthusiasm up. In turn, it keeps the members eager, long, long after Labor Day. That means, too, that we're going to make some sales.

We fill in the void left by the return of our caddies to school by having the entire fleet of electric cars available. I had felt that the fall departure of our caddies was a great deterrent to many who would otherwise play. The golf car, though, has changed this. We have figures to prove it.

## Keep Them Competing

Competition is vital in order to maintain interest in any sport. As a result, since the 1960 season, we have held Pro-Trophy tournament for the men's association each year in late September or early in October. Last season we conducted the first one for the women's association in late September. The men's tournament, played to full handicaps, began in 1960 as a 36-hole event and was expanded to 72 holes the following year. The women's tournament also allows use of full handicaps. It is now a 36-hole event although we plan to expand it to 72 holes in the future. These Pro-Trophy tournaments offer perpetual trophies to the winners as well as other prizes.

In 1961, the women's association extended its regular season schedule to Sept. 15. Last year, as a result of the scheduling of our Pro-Trophy tournament for the women in late September, it was extended to Oct. 1. It is my hope that this season the women will play until at least mid-October because it has been proved that the interest is there. It has been found that while some women are more limited as to time for playing golf in the fall, there is a large number who have more time with the return

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## Personnel Management

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greensmen and foremen, golf professionals or managers, and stimulate their best efforts toward the pride in authorship necessary to the realization of predetermined goals.

To lead is to work longer and harder than anyone who follows. It is to exhibit boundless initiative and creativity. It is to establish just and equitable work loads and payrolls. It is to communicate with laborers, foremen and executives. It is to follow through on orders given, to be on the job at the right place at the right time. It is to set an example of personal qualities as well as professional knowledge. It is to know much personal satisfaction.

Terry Van Gorder besides being the general manager of Peacock Gap G & CC in San Rafael, Calif., is designing a 9-hole course in Sonoma that will soon be constructed. He studied turf management under his father, E. W. Van Gorder, at the Stanford University course. He was graduated from Yale University in 1955 and served four years in the Navy. Van Gorder was a construction supt. for Architect Bill Bell on several California course jobs and, after completing work on Peacock Gap, stayed on as manager.

## Extend the Season

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of their youngsters to school. In many cases, the fall offers an opportunity for them to play more golf than they did through the summer.

### Full Maintenance Provided

The Supt. and his crew provide course maintenance in the fall just as in the summer. This season I plan to hold a tournament as late as Oct. 15. This, of course, would be impossible if a full maintenance crew wasn't on the job.

I have mentioned that it takes some competition to keep the members coming out to the course after Labor Day. Speaking of competition, I think that Northern pros have to take a second look at the word and consider what "the competition" is doing if they go out of business at the end of summer. In the seven month interval between the close of one season and the beginning of a new one in the spring, "the competition" can make great inroads in our business.