

U.S. Golf Handicaps Provides Ratings for Casual Players

While golf is admittedly a game that anyone can play, including the handicapped, according to Bill Brown, executive director of the United States Golf Handicaps, Inc., "golf is a game that everyone can play, especially the handicapped."

USGH is pointing its business finger directly at that legion of golfers who play only occasionally. It is quite possible that few, if any, of these players know what a handicap is or how handicaps are figured. USGH hopes to take on the task of educating and informing this group of golfers about handicapping, ultimately selling them the service which includes the necessary tallying and dispensing of ratings.

How It Works

It is quite an ambitious program, but at the price of \$5.00 for membership, USGH prices compare favorably with fees charged by local golf organizations. Here is the way USGH works:

Upon receipt of a membership fee, the golfer receives a handicap card which has vertical spaces for 24 separate scores. The horizontal matching columns have spaces for the date of the game, course played, 18-hole score and rating of the course. (When no course rating is available, USGH computes a rating based on yardage calculation comparable to other course ratings at similar distances.)

Six Computations

Individual handicaps are computed six times a year. A due mailing date for bi-monthly submission of the card to USGH headquarters in Pebble Beach is recorded at the bottom of the handicap card. The specially punched card is fed into an IBM mechanism — a few whirs, hums, and clanks later — and out pops a new rating, consistent with every fact and score fed into the maw of the computer. The handicap is consistent in that it is limited to the honesty and integrity of its submitter. A large scale digital computer, supplied by IBM, makes the art

of handicapping a by-product of the electronics industry.

Sees No Conflict

It is interesting to note that many of the affiliated clubs of the United States Golf Association are becoming involved in electronic computing of handicaps. Questioned about the effect his handicapping service may have on USGA members, Brown replies, "We are not soliciting or trying to influence any present or prospective members of the USGA or their allied associations. The services provided by these groups are both necessary and beneficial."

"The fact remains," Brown continues, "that the largest number of golfers comprising the overall market, for reasons of their own, are not included within the USGA. Moreover, we are convinced that many of these people do want a handicap to compete with their fellow golfers."

Brown is undoubtedly correct in his assumption that the USGA membership comprises a minority of the golfing public. GOLFDOM estimates that there are more than 5,000,000 persons who play 15 times a year or more. It is likely that there are another million or so who play less frequently.

For Golf Outings

A large part of the group which plays less frequently may be found within the special groups of business firms, fraternal orders, convention associations, and others whose golf activity is limited to one or two planned outings per season. For these players, U. S. Golf Handicaps offers a uniform service that removes the headaches of temporary handicapping from committee chairmen and others who are presently charged with such responsibilities.

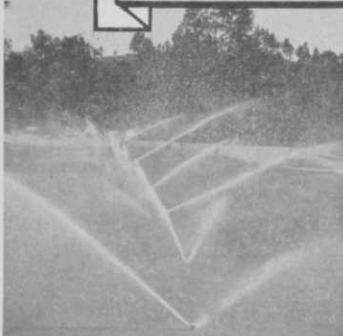
Other services provided and planned by USGH include free tournament score sheets plus a special series of local state and regional tournaments. Eventually, Brown foresees a national tournament — but this appears to be some time away.

Aims at Professionals

In its first six months of operation, USGH has already signed more than 6500 members. Indications are that the group will surpass 10,000 before its first fiscal year ends. Brown and company plan a hard-hitting merchandising plan aimed at golf professionals and golf shops for the recruitment of additional members.

(Continued on Page 100)

For any club... **RAIN BIRD** AUTOMATIC SPRINKLING SYSTEM MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE



Completely automatic Rain Bird system at new Belvedere Country Club, Hot Springs, Arkansas.

sprinkling, at just the right time...all the time.

Which is exactly what you get with Rain Bird's completely automatic system. With the Rain Bird Rain-Clox controller you can sprinkle as briefly as a minute...or as long as an hour. And you can choose the cycle that's best for your turf and climatic conditions.

Combined with Rain Bird's Rotor Pop-Up Impulse Sprinklers, this completely automatic system provides the most scientifically exact, *trouble-free* sprinkling any club could want. Find out for yourself what a *big difference* Rain Bird can make!



Rain Bird Rain-Clox remote sprinkling controller. Completely automatic. Just set it and forget it.

Rotor Pop-up in open position. Green vinyl covered top. Numerous models.



For engineering information about Rain Bird automatic sprinkling systems, contact your local Rain Bird dealer or write direct (in the East and Midwest) Rainy Sprinkler Sales, Div. L. R. Nelson Mfg. Inc., 609 West Lake St., Peoria 5, Ill.; (in the West) Rain Bird Sprinkler Mfg. Corp., P.O. Box 37, Glendora, Calif.

RAIN BIRD
SUREST AID TO IRRIGATION

eral reasons. It requires only a third of the land required for a full-sized course, permitting it to be located closer to densely populated areas. Maintenance requires a labor and material cost only half as large as a regulation course. Furthermore, it is the ideal layout for efficient, effective and economical illumination.

The importance of good lighting cannot be overemphasized. There is only one way to light a golf course — properly. I know of several courses that spent large sums for lights but ended up discontinuing night play because lighting was poorly designed and installed. Such failures make it difficult to promote night golf, but these design and installation difficulties have been overcome with quality equipment and technical knowhow.

Ratings for Casual Players

(Continued from page 55)

"We have an inducement plan for professionals," Brown states. "Our selling methods are aimed at providing a cash bonus for the shop personnel. At one northern California course, we have aimed our commission program at the assistant professionals. So far, this has gained the approval of leading head profes-

sionals who are interested in seeing their assistants get a break."

For Bill Brown, USGH is a fulfillment of a life's dream that has centered on golf activities, sales, and promotions. A one-time furniture and appliance salesman, Brown a few years ago became associated with Sprawkins Downtown Golf Shop in San Francisco, the largest merchandiser of golf goods in northern California. That made him a permanent convert to golf, if nothing else did. He has been working in the business end of the game ever since.

Poor Man's Crosby

Brown has gained added recognition as a promoter through his creation of a golf safari called "The Poor Man's Crosby." This soiree was styled after the famous clambake, only the appeal was directed to Bay Area country club players who were lured into the Monterey peninsula for a sophisticated summertime golf tournament.

Bill Brown's ultimate aim is to put a handicap into every golf bag. He wants to make golf a game for the handicapped and by the handicapped. To Brown and the many people who only occasionally play the game, the only handicap in golf is no handicap at all.