

# Older Players Take New Lease on Golf at Rogue Valley

*But it wasn't that way until four years ago when it was decided that all the Senior members needed was organization . . . Now, the Medford, Ore., group serves as a perfect example of what can be done when elder golfers decide to help themselves*

By **ROBERT J. WELLS**

President, Senior Golf Association  
Rogue Valley CC, Medford, Ore.

*Senior players are well organized on a sectional and even national basis, but so far as many individual clubs are concerned, the golfing elders seem to be among our forgotten men. There probably isn't any question that if the oldsters want to organize associations at their clubs, they'll have to personally take the initiative in getting them set up. Here, Bob Wells gives an interesting description of how it can be done. — Ed.*

**A**t the Rogue Valley CC in Medford, Ore. 30 miles from California's northern border, there is an unusual organization. It is an association of Senior golfers — a club within a club.

Medford is not a large town (population 27,000) but its golf club is rapidly

becoming one of the largest on the Pacific slope. The club membership is now close to 1300, of whom about 700 are playing members. The clubhouse is large and rambling, with a huge terrace looking out onto the beautiful Siskiyou mountains.

The locker rooms and pro shop are housed under one roof in a new and fully equipped building. A new swimming pool and twin tennis courts complete the picture. The course layout is 27 holes, with three full sized practice holes.

## Exclusion is Excluded

The club is owned by the Golf Holding Co. of which Glenn L. Jackson, Medford businessman, is the chief stockholder. The club is essentially Jackson's concept — a club for the entire community, and not one that prides itself on being exclusive.

The initiation fee is an extremely low \$75, plus tax, and dues are only \$17.40 per month for playing members and their



Seniors Golf Association officers at Rogue Valley are (l to r): Lloyd Selby, director; Robert J. Wells, who wrote this article, president; Glen Fabrick, secretary-treasurer; and A. S. Weiant, director. William Tallis, director, was not present when this photo was taken.

families. It costs \$7.50 per month for a social membership.

#### Vacations Planned for It

The 36-year-old Southern Oregon championship is held at Rogue Valley each year. It draws entries from all over the West and essentially is a gathering at which people relax and have fun. Many people from upstate take their vacations to be on hand for the event, which is annually staged during the last week in August through Labor Day. Last year, there were 432 entries.

The Seniors tournament at Rogue Valley had been run year in and year out, but in rather haphazard fashion. The entry list was small and very little interest was shown in the event. In the spring of 1961, Bill Clark, the club's tournament chairman, asked me to take over as chairman of the Seniors tournament committee.

After accepting, I gave the situation a good deal of thought. There was no reason, I decided, why the Seniors tournament had to lag. It should be built up to

something approximating the Southern Oregon championship because there were plenty of older golfers who would take an interest in it if they were stirred up a little.

#### Organization Needed

The first thing that occurred to me was that a Seniors tournament should be run by Seniors. This called for an organization of older golfers at the club. I passed this thought along to Rogue Valley's club manager, Jim Dunlevy and Ron Caperna, the professional. They endorsed it 100 per cent, and we went to work.

Time was short. It was now going into June and the Seniors was to be played in July. Dunlevy provided a list of all playing members over 50. With the help of my wife, I got in touch with all the players on the list and asked them to attend a Seniors organization meeting on June 21. About 35 of the 80 men who were contacted showed up. That wasn't bad for a starter — in fact, it was excellent. That night the Rogue Valley Seniors or-



Rogue Valley's rambling clubhouse as seen from the first fairway.

ganization was launched.

The 35 men who showed up that night are now charter members of an organization that we believe to be the only one of its kind in the U.S. — a Seniors organization within the membership of the club itself, complete with a board of directors and a full roster of officers. Today we have 85 members, each of whom pays dues of \$15 per year. For this they receive 3 very fine dinners at the club each year, a sweepstakes each month from March thru October and a free entry into the Seniors tournament.

### Three Age Brackets

All sweepstakes and tournaments are played in three age brackets: A—50 to 55; AA—55 to 60; AAA—60 and up. In the Seniors championship there is competition for four large trophies. One is for the grand championship, played on a scratch basis, and one each for the three age brackets. The latter are played on a handicap basis.

The Seniors championship tournament in 1964 drew 54 entries, a decided improvement over the years when there was no organization. Now in its fourth year, the Seniors club can now be considered a successful working club within a club. The original board of directors was responsible for the excellent manner in

which the club was organized.

The advantages of this type of club are obvious. Seniors at Rogue Valley now participate in the largest number of events in the club. They have a much better opportunity of playing with men of their own age. They get to know one another better. For the newcomer over 50, the Seniors club is a terrific boon. It would take the new member a long time to become as well acquainted as he does through this organization. It's the only thing that is exclusive at Rogue Valley. A person can't get in until he is 50. You'd be surprised at how many new members we get when that 50th anniversary rolls around.

### Offer to Help

Dedicated men are the secret behind most successful organizations. We have at least one who kind of lives for the Seniors organization. His name is Glen Fabrick. He has been secretary-treasurer of the club since it was organized and there isn't any inconvenience that Glen won't countenance in doing something to help the Seniors group. What is more, Fabrick and myself offer a permanent invitation to members of other clubs to come to Rogue Valley and see how we run our Seniors organization. If this isn't convenient, we

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## New Lease on Golf

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promptly answer all correspondence pertaining to our club and the way that it operates.

Handicap figures of the Rogue Valley Seniors compare favorably with the overall handicap brackets of other players at the club. Here is how they stack up:

12 handicap or under.	31
12 to 21	31
over 21	22

Broken down as to age groups:

50 to 55 years.	Handicap under 12	15
55 to 60 years.	Handicap under 12	11
60 and over	Handicap under 12	5

### One-Sixth of Play

Seniors account for about one-sixth of the play at Rogue Valley. Total play per day, men, women and children, averages about 175 rounds. There usually is about one week a year when conditions are not favorable for play. There are about 10 days of rain a year. That means we have no more than a total of 17 days when

there is no golf. Hence, we have in our 347 playing days a total of about 61,000 rounds. Of these, the Seniors account for at least 10,000.

Women's play is strong at Rogue Valley. The women, too, have a vigorous association within the club and they account for approximately 30,000 rounds a year.

Our Senior members are very much above average in patronage of club facilities as well as in the amount of golf played. The retirement factor accounts for this exceptional use of the club. We have a large percentage of retired members.

We get 50 to 60 Seniors out for our monthly sweepstakes. One of our popular events is a three ball-best ball threesomes team affair, with each team competing against the others in medal and match and length of drives. Prizes are merchandise certificates, each certificate being worth one to five points. Each point is valued at \$1.25. The certificates, of course, are redeemable in the pro shop.

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National Golf Day • May 31

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