



# Accent on management

by Ken Emerson *Executive Director, National Club Association*

**W**hen a member is elected to his club board or accepts a committee assignment he becomes a representative of the entire membership. His responsibilities are both legal and personal, and, while he can delegate many of them, he cannot avoid his ultimate responsibility of stewardship to his fellow members.

Whether he realizes it or not, when he accepts his appointment he also assumes a considerable workload. He must attend meetings regularly, be present at the social and athletic functions of the club—especially those with which he is directly involved—and spend a great deal of his personal time considering matters of policy and informing himself of club activities.

Most members begin their club service careers at the committee level. As a committeeman, he has his first real contact with the nitty-gritty of club operations. Though his efforts may go unheralded and unrecognized, his decision may well affect the future of his club for years to come.

Equally important, how he's allowed to conduct his club duties—and the guidance he receives while conducting them—will influence his opinion of clubdom for an even longer period. The following is offered to prepare you, the new appointee, for these duties.

## PLANNING THE MEETING

Whether you are a member of a special or a standing committee, the problem of planning a meeting will always confront the chairman. Here are a few things to consider if you want a successful meeting.

## THE ROOM

Too many committee chairmen seem to think that any kind of a

room is perfectly all right for a meeting. Such items as acoustics, seating, ventilation, lighting, telephones and accessibility usually occur to them after a meeting has been a complete flop due to inattention to these details.

Here are a few simple rules to follow in selecting your meeting room. Follow them and you'll find a good part of your job completed with a strong possibility of having a successful session.

1. Select a room easily reached by those attending. Be sure the time is convenient.
2. Avoid distractions. Interrupt your meeting with distracting street noises or a clear view out of the window into interesting scenes, and you'll have all the competition you can handle in trying to keep the group's thinking on the beam.
3. And please remember ventilation. A hot, smoke-filled room doesn't improve attention or tempers.
4. See that the place is well-lighted and that the lights are on before the meeting.
5. The ideal room is slightly longer than wide, should not be cut up with columns and other obstructions. Its size should be sufficient to comfortably accommodate the group, but not so large as to swallow them in a vast space.
6. If you are meeting around a table, see that the table is there beforehand and a sufficient number of chairs to meet requirements.

## SPECIAL COMMITTEES

You can't have a successful meeting without proper individuals on your committee. If you are chair-

man and are requested to select your committee members, your club manager can help you tremendously with this task by pointing out individuals who will fit into your particular committee and have some knowledge of the subject you are to consider.

Put people on your committee who have sufficient experience and a working knowledge of the subject and of the club. Should you fail to do so, the entire burden of directing and leading your group will fall on you—an unnecessary load.

## SPECIAL MEETINGS

In planning your meeting, develop an agenda and ask your club manager to issue it to the committee members well in advance of the meeting. Be sure your agenda plainly states the time and place of the meeting. Follow this with a carefully drawn list of subjects to be discussed and the goals you must reach.

The importance of having an agenda can't be overstressed. Attempting to hold a meeting without an agenda is like trying to find your way in a strange city without a map. To call a meeting with an attitude of, "Well, boys, here we are; what are we going to talk about?" will buy you a meeting that will accomplish nothing.

Be sure to have someone present at the meeting who is familiar with the various subjects to be discussed. Better yet, get an expert.

Notify these people well in advance of the role they are to play at the meeting and make certain that each comes prepared to discuss his particular subject.

After the presentations, when your group is somewhat familiar

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with various phases of the subjects, open it up for discussion among the entire committee.

To call a meeting without an agenda and to open the subject to discussion among people completely unfamiliar with it, is a total waste of time and you may well end up with no solution at all.

**STANDING COMMITTEES**

This isn't quite so involved a process as planning the special committee meeting. Even here though, you are usually considering routine subjects, so preparedness will pay off.

Know in advance precisely what you want your meeting to cover and do sufficient research to enable you to predict the probable answer.

You should plan to solve a problem—not merely hold a meeting. Treat your members as resources that will help you reach the solution and the meeting as the bridge that gets you there.

Don't attempt to call a committee

meeting unless you have an agenda or outline. Issue this to the members before the meeting so they will be familiar with the subjects that are to be discussed and can offer suggestions regarding others that should be considered.

**COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN**

During your term as chairman of a committee, your most constant help will come from your club manager and from your club office. Many of your plans can and should be built in conjunction with him. Your manager and his staff are thoroughly familiar with your club and its problems, and have the ability to lighten the load you will be carrying.

In working with the manager, it is a good idea to handle all action through his office. By keeping him informed and familiar with your activities and committee progress he will be able to give advice on all types of procedures based on his broad experience. The club office has mailing lists and information that will save you and your committee, and your personal business staff, many hours of unnecessary labor.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Your committee chairman isn't faced with an easy job of presiding at your meetings and guiding them to a successful conclusion where a definite decision is reached, or positive action taken that is beneficial to your organization. You can help him considerably, and at the same time save yourself the agony of attending a pointless and chaotic meeting, by observing the following suggestions:

1. If an agenda is issued prior to the meeting, study it carefully. If there is any item on it you don't completely understand, contact the club manager and ask him to familiarize you with the subject.
2. Learn the exact purpose of the meeting and determine in advance what you are going to do about it.
3. During the meeting stick to the agenda. Offering subjects for discussion not contained in it impedes the meeting.

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Wait until the chairman asks for discussion on subjects not appearing on the agenda.

4. Keep your responses short and to the point—you're not there to deliver an oration.
5. When you speak, do it clearly in a voice everyone can hear. Make certain everyone is listening—you can't offer your remarks against a half-dozen side conversations.
6. Side conversations are poor taste and slow the meeting. You are there to speak before the group. This doesn't require hoarse whispers to the person sitting next to you.
7. When speaking, talk to the group. Remarks addressed to your friend across the table exclude the rest.
8. If you think some of your remarks escaped the others, repeat them.
9. If your remarks are lengthy or involved, sum them up at the end of your discussion.

Somebody may have forgotten your objective before you have finished.

10. Aimless discussion may arise on subjects requiring further information. Stop them with a motion—a group be appointed to study the subject. This is one of the best methods of cutting a meeting short and adjourning on time.
11. Don't hesitate to comment, criticize constructively or disagree. Know your subject and ask for support from members who believe as you do.
12. If you disagree with the speaker, ask questions. Make him completely clarify his remarks—pinpoint them on a direct resume everyone can understand.
13. If you have a comment, ask for the floor. Don't enter into a general hubbub. What you have to say is a genuine contribution—don't lose it in confused conversation.
14. There may be dissenters on some subjects. Ask them to

summarize their convictions in a direct conclusion. This permits a more thorough examination of the idea that could be highly constructive when completely understood.

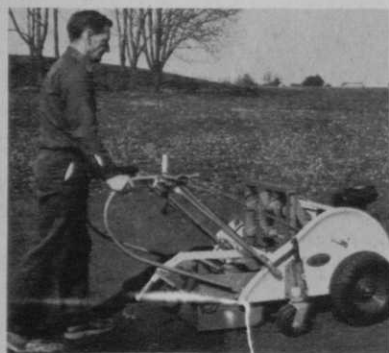
15. Hurriedly passed motions (to get the thing over with) usually don't receive the consideration they deserve. Better leave them until the next meeting than to pass a motion you will regret later.
16. After the meeting ask yourself if you made a genuine contribution to the advancement of your club. If you're in doubt, ask the club manager. He can give you an accurate opinion. He's lived through many meetings and consulted with many committee members.

Adherence to these rules will not lessen your responsibilities, but it will enable you to discharge them more efficiently—and enjoy it. Although being on a committee may not be a surefire beginning to club leadership, it is a pretty fair stepping stone. Take it with care. □

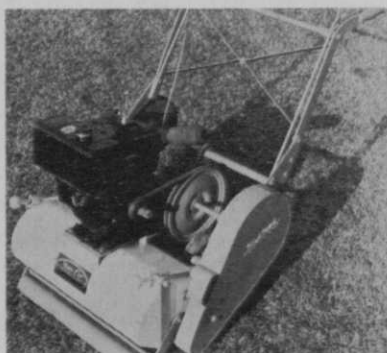
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