

Accent on management

by Ken Emerson



Where does attire fit in With a club's prestige?

Does a turtleneck in the main dining room or shorts on the porch affect a club's prestige?

If a miniskirt is acceptable in the lounge, can a micro be far behind?

Style changes in sports clothing usually bring only mild comment in the club world. However, recent rapid shifts in street and evening fashions—both men's and women's—have presented the governing bodies of many clubs with a major decision.

At what point does dress begin to affect a club's prestige?

Although a club directorate sets the height of a hemline, it ultimately falls on the club management to enforce the rules.

In recent months, whenever two club managers have met, one of the first questions has been, "What's your club doing about turtlenecks?" and, "Do you really think it affects prestige?"

One recent discussion involving a half dozen managers from a cross section of clubs ranging from very small to larger than usual, and from minimum budget to very wealthy, lasted for the better part of two days. It turned up some interesting conclusions.

While some definite opinions, and conclusions, were expressed about today's styles, they led to even more valuable conclusions concerning "club prestige." In fact, a good deal more was said about what club prestige is, and how it is acquired, than about whether a Nehru jacket was appropriate evening wear in the formal dining room or what people are apt to wear to dinner.

In fact, the opinion seemed to be

that unless clothes are the only criteria for judging a man's eligibility to membership in a country club, it is difficult to see just what they *do* have to do with prestige.

Of course, what many people are really talking about is "status," in the classic sense of author Vance Packard's *The Status Seekers*. A sort of "I'm better than you because my club has more prestige than yours" approach.

While it is undoubtedly true that some clubs still operate with status as their objective and find people to join them, most of today's successful clubs have set *service and fulfilling the membership's common purpose* as their objectives. In so doing they are creating "prestige" of the second and other sort.

The club administrators, both professional and volunteer, who are able to analyze the wants of their membership and to develop services that can fill those wants will earn the "prestige" label for their clubs that most nearly fits the modern definition.

In order to do this clubs must develop first, the *means* to determine what people want in a club and, second, a *method* to change its services to meet the changing needs of its membership.

If a golf club is to draw any worthwhile conclusions about its membership's needs, it has to have a measurement that can be applied to the golfing activity on a regular basis. One such method being used is to divide the membership into its most obvious groupings. These might be professional people, seniors, women, juniors (men and women) and teens. Some clubs also use immediate neighborhood and city resident groups.

Each of these groupings is then

reviewed to answer the following.

1. What is the frequency of golf course use?
2. Is the use increasing or decreasing?
3. Should provisions be made to increase, decrease, eliminate their use or should they be left alone?
4. If we change a group's use of the course, will it affect another group? If so, how?
5. Will any changes under consideration be within the framework of the club's policies and objectives?
6. Does the course now fulfill the club's financial objectives? Will it do so if changed?

The same six yardsticks can also be applied to the club's other services; swimming, tennis, and social affairs.

Applied regularly—annually or biannually—these yardsticks will enable the club to be sure that it is both meeting the needs of the entire membership and fulfilling the objectives for which it was organized. The result will be prestige.

And *that* can be measured by the size of the waiting list.

And what of the turtleneck sweater in the dining room?

The consensus was that, regardless of the rules that the club's administrators might make, some members would see fit to at least try to break them. If the rule breakers are accepted by the majority of the members, then changes in the rules are in order. If the style is generally unacceptable, it was the unanimous opinion of the managers that the members themselves would take steps to see that the recalcitrants got the necessary message.

For the record, a survey that started with those present at the

discussion, and has continued informally since, would seem to indicate a general trend toward acceptance of the changes in men's wear.

In actual practice, clubs vary widely in what they will now accept. Most draw no hard line in the daytime. Some, including many "prestige" clubs, now permit turtle-necks and Nehru jackets in the evening as well; this is more frequent in the West. A few permit turtle-necks only if worn with full dress evening wear.

It depends on what the members consider "prestige." □

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mets. Private country clubs and privately financed fee courses trail.

Those Big Men you hear or read about as Great Promoters can take lessons from the charming and brilliant businesswoman Carol McCue, who is executive secretary or director of something of the Chicago District GA. President Lennox Haldeman, Ralph Peterson, Merritt Lovett, Bill Pailey, Morton Eldon, Jim O'Keefe and other male officials of the CDGA, when the association's eight-day golf air junkets for Spanish golf were discussed as a service to its members, said, "Let's see what Carol can do." Already 20 of the planned 25 charter plane trips, from October 11 to March 28, are filled. The \$350 price tag includes transportation, hotels, meals and golf. Looks like our Carol has made golf business history. She's not only smart, but very pretty. She arranges the CDGA annual air trips to the Masters.

Arnold Palmer winning the Radix trophy for PGA tournament scoring low average for 1967, and for the fourth time, with a

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