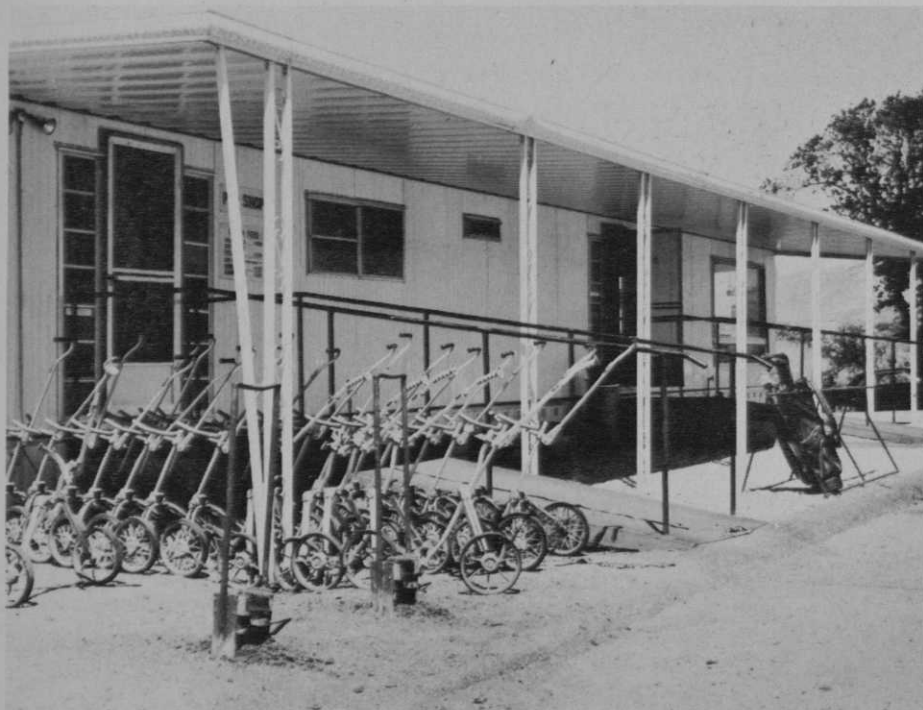


By DON CURLEE

INSTANT CLUBHOUSE



Rather than waiting for permanent structures to be built before starting up operations, a golf club can build up a business in advance by using a mobile housing unit as a temporary base

LARGE mobile homes that aren't expected to go anywhere are helping several golf courses to get moving in the early days of operation by housing golf professional shops, food concessions, restaurants and other essential functions.

The length of time these clubhouses on wheels perform their all-purpose duties varies, depending on the time it takes to construct permanent facilities. Several courses in northern California have found that the temporary quarters have almost immeasurable value because they permit them to build up a business with clubs, other equipment and food services, which expands when the permanent structure is built.

Golf operators have found also that they can lease the mobile

structures, conserving a cash outlay that can be used to good advantage in a number of other places, especially during start-up.

Plans at Franklin Canyon GC near Martinez, Calif., in the San Francisco Bay area, call for a permanent clubhouse bordering the creek at Franklin Canyon, but two mobile homes side by side serve as clubhouse, professional shop and snack bar, close to the site that will be occupied by the permanent building.

"We miss the locker rooms," says operator Pat Markovich, "but this arrangement has given us a good start and allowed us to base our business on the golf course. The players we have attracted will be the nucleus for expanding our operation when we have the permanent clubhouse with complete facilities for banquets and large tournaments." One small permanent building at Franklin Canyon serves as golf car storage and doubles as maintenance headquarters.

Markovich showed the mobile home syndrome very early in the construction phase of Franklin Canyon. He moved onto the site during preliminary grading in a small house trailer that served as an office. Its kitchen produced countless cups of coffee and its complete facilities provided shelter from cool winds and winter rains. Markovich admits to spending a few nights aboard when days ended late at night or when he wanted to be on hand very early the next morning.

The two mobile homes at Franklin Canyon were specially

made for the purpose, designed by Markovich and his partners. Together they are 24 feet by 60 feet, enclosing 1,466 square feet. The two trailers are four feet longer than any mobile homes previously constructed.

They provide a dining area that seats 30, in addition to the kitchen and grill, two restrooms, the professional shop, a small office and ball supply for the practice ranges. An aluminum awning attached to one side covers another area of about 700 square feet for storing pull carts and for outdoor lounging and dining.

Air conditioning in the summer and forced air heating in the winter maintain an even indoor temperature. Large picture windows look out onto the golf course from both the professional shop and the dining area, and each has its own entry with a hallway connecting them.

Although players and visitors often remark about the spaciousness of the structures, Markovich admits that the quarters become a bit cramped after being there day after day. "It isn't fully adequate," he says, "but it's filling a need for us."



At Franklin Canyon (opposite) an awning creates lounging cart storage areas. Junior golfer (below) shops among \$20,000 inventory at Walnut Creek's "pro shop." Golf cars (above) line up at temporary clubhouse at Heather Farms.

While awaiting construction of the permanent clubhouse Markovich makes the most of the mobile structures, wheels removed, set on a block foundation. The county planning commission granted permission to use the temporary structures for one year and then extended that permission for a second year.

Partly because the two units are oversize and made to Franklin Canyon's specifications they were purchased instead of leased. But Markovich feels chances are good for selling them when they have outlived their usefulness. "Many other clubs want to do the same thing as they start," he says, "so I think we can sell them easily." The wheels can be attached and the units moved to another location on a moment's notice.

At Walnut Creek, Calif., a new municipal golf course was ready for play well ahead of the nearly \$1 million permanent clubhouse. Double mobile units were used for the professional shop, a restroom and lounging area. Food services were supplied by several vending machines grouped at one end of the complex.

A large window at the opposite end overlooked the first tee and gave professional LeRoy Silva and assistants Nick Andrakin and Al Weintz excellent observation from their office and counter area immediately under the window.

Although the trailers at Walnut Creek were made to allow two doorways on one side, only one was used because it simplified the traffic flow and allowed a longer expanse of wall space for merchandise display.

One disadvantage cited by Silva was the inadequate restroom facil-

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Large windows in Franklin Canyon's dining area give members a view of the golf course.

ities. There was only one. "Once we had a gentleman and a lady headed that way at the same time—they worked out a priority system, fortunately." The restroom also doubled as a dressing room, but the ladies were hesitant to use it for trying on apparel, fearful that they might be keeping somebody else waiting.

Nevertheless, soft goods were an important part of the estimated \$20,000 inventory Silva carried in the temporary shop. He moved into the trailer during the first week of April, 1969, and settled into the permanent building in August. The mobile units came equipped with tile floors, so Silva purchased indoor-outdoor carpet at about \$2.75 per square yard and installed it himself.

In addition to the carpet, Silva installed a burglar alarm system at his own expense—\$150 deposit and \$90 per month.

The City of Walnut Creek, which operates the golf facility, arranged for the two trailer units which provided space of 30 feet by 56 feet. The units were leased from a firm in Oakland, Calif., at about \$175 per month.

City Manager Ralph Snyder said service was a major consideration when the city chose the leasing firm. "Spikes can be very dam-

aging, and we insisted on maintenance that would overcome their effect." The trailer leasing firm supplied the step and hand rail for the doorway, everything but the hook-ups for lights and water. This unit, too, is heated and air conditioned.

Heather Farms is a nine-hole course also in Walnut Creek, Calif., where a double mobile home unit first housed the professional shop, office and restrooms. Merchandise was arranged in the professional shop to create diagonal aisles, which made the interior seem roomier. A large window midway in the unit flooded the inside with natural light to highlight the color of the soft goods. Fluorescent lighting supplemented.

The units at Heather Farms were leased. When the permanent clubhouse was completed in October, 1969, the units were moved out overnight and the merchandise and operations transferred.

Location is one of the major benefits of the mobile units. They can be placed precisely where they are needed, turned in exactly the right direction and semi-permanent additions made. Besides the awning which creates the outdoor lounging area and pull cart storage at Franklin Canyon, a slatted fence has been installed at the rear,

making a yard and storage area off the "back" door leading to the kitchen.

Another use has been made of mobile homes at the Olympic Club in San Francisco where two specially equipped, small trailers are used as snack concessions, one on the Oceanside course and the other on the Lakeside.

Proprietor of these is Bill Parrish, an amiable San Francisco musician, who keeps his lip in proper playing condition by bringing his trumpet to the concession trailer to serenade golfers occasionally—but not on their back swings. Parrish's wife operates the concession in the trailer on the other course.

Parrish finds that the coldest and wettest weather can't penetrate the trailers, which are well-insulated against the elements. Small awnings shelter counters on the outside to make service to golfers more convenient.

Trailers such as Parrish operates are ideal for tournament concession stands. Small adjacent areas can be fenced easily to provide temporary storage for items such as drinks, which do not have to be covered or enclosed.

At the Bing Crosby tournament at Pebble Beach several of these trailers are used every year. All are specially equipped with drink dispensers, refrigerators, food storage space and counters inside and out. Large windows accommodate a number of customers at once, and the interior is large enough for three or more to work in relative comfort.

With the amazing growth of the mobile home market in recent years, manufacturers and distribution are within the reach of almost every golf operator. Special construction can be arranged easily. Transportation and placement of the units often is done by specialists on contract.

Even without wheels these mobile units have a lot going for them. For little more than a phone call you can have instant clubhouse. □