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REACTIONS TO GOLFDOM'S SURVEY

Thanks to superintendents, professionals, managers, club officials, course owners and public course executives who collaborated in GOLFDOM's Fourth Annual Golf Industry Marketing and Research survey, golf business recently has been engaged in critical self-examination.

"How do GOLFDOM's figures compare with ours?" many successful men in various facets of the golf business asked themselves and their associates after studying the returns reported in February GOLFDOM.

At spring sectional meetings of professionals, superintendents and managers the GOLFDOM survey figures were a leading subject of discussion. Some, naturally, questioned the figures that didn't make their own operations look any too good.

Sorry, but we can't help it. We know as well as anyone that no two golf operations are identical.

And don't blame us for the way the figures came out. They tell the story of a search for helpful facts.

Golf course equipment and materials dealers and manufacturers at the Golf Course Superintendents Assn.'s annual meeting in Cincinnati remarked that the GOLFDOM survey indication of a substantial increase in 1972 purchasing after a drop since 1969, was substantiated by buying at the GCSAA show.

The pro findings seemed to bear out what we've been saying about the need of professionals to discover ways of selling clubs. Little things, such as gloves, headcovers and knick-knacks, sold well, seemingly because they were spot-

lighted with attractive displays in pro shops. Professionals have found out that people buy rather than are sold apparel in pro shops and smart selection of stock and displays are the money answer.

But the clubs—there was the aluminum shaft sales spree—then the drop. Now valuable new design factors are available, but too many professionals haven't been able to find the tie-up between the lesson tee demonstrations of clubs and the sales slip, so clubs often have to sell themselves by advertising to bring buyers into the pro shops.

Sales managers and a few advertising agency executives have been talking about the GOLFDOM marketing picture in its possible slants concerning the trend toward new, more expensive cast heads. There are design experiments as drastic as those of the Ogg-mented head in which Willie Ogg years ago adapted an old Scottish idea of toe-weighting to balance hosel weight.

As we've pointed out, the price of top-quality sets of irons and woods are higher than the United States Golf Assn. allows for amateur prizes, so there's going to have to be an adjustment made somewhere, sometime.

As one who has read numerous "feasibility studies" of public utilities in which brokerage houses suggest I risk a few bucks, I've got to say the "feasibility report" that made the plainest sense in dollars is the one Fred L. Stewart of the National Golf Foundation submitted to Eugene Thomas, general manager Pearl River Valley Water Supply District, about a contemplated course in the Jackson, Miss., metropolitan area.

This is one of those very rare bus-

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inesslike reports in which you can translate words into money and come out with a reasonable estimate of cost, operating expense and net profit of providing the community with an asset of inestimable value.

Real estate-golf projects that are dependent on borrowed money and borrowed time can get valuable guidance from the *National Golf Foundation*. The foundation is helpful beyond measure in contributing to the pursuit of happiness, the development of natural resources and the enlargement of the golf market. Its annual budget is about half of 1 per cent of the sales of playing and course maintenance equipment in the golf industry market.

It has personnel who are a marvelous bargain because they love the golf cause. Right at the start of the foundation, there was *Glenn Morris*, who took a cut in salary and resigned from the Walter Hagen Golf Company to do a foundation job that fascinated him. He got the industry promotion going. *Rex McMorris* was shanghaied into foundation direction from the Junior Chamber of Commerce work, and with a million loose ends got them knit together for more golf.

McMorris quit to accept the challenge of a northern Illinois community golf course and other recreational developments that had him in an argument about the soundness of the foundation's elements of course location, building and operation. McMorris proved himself immensely important to his community. *Harry Eckhoff*, a school teacher who'd done a tremendously valuable job for the Army, retired from military service and joined the foundation. He was a fine reporter and field man and had a gift of organizing. He became a field man for the foundation, then when office work got McMorris stir-crazy, Harry was made head man. He could stand it so long, and did plenty to get the paperwork organized perfectly. Then Eckhoff went back to touring the Atlantic littoral, telling golf people what others had learned the hard way. He was, and is, an expert

at this kind of work.

Harry Eckhoff was succeeded by *Bill Pack*, a retired Navy captain and peace-time golf club official and industrial management expert who loved golf. He likewise discovered there was more inside work than he hankered for during a period when several larger golf companies were going through merger and conglomeration changes with worries that wound up with Bill Pack. He told them when the buck could stop.

Then came *Don Rossi*, who'd headed Army athletic work and had been a star college athlete, a successful coach and a very suc-

cessful salesman and sales executive of a major sporting goods manufacturing company. The competent, imaginative and vigorous Rossi came in as the right guy at a critical time to protect and extend the National Golf Foundation's performance as the most effective market promotion operation in all sports.

The Stewart feasibility report on the Jackson, Miss., course had me wondering about the United States Golf Assn.'s National course in New Jersey. That had better be the most ideally designed, constructed and operated golf course in the world, and be finan-

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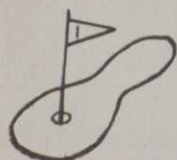
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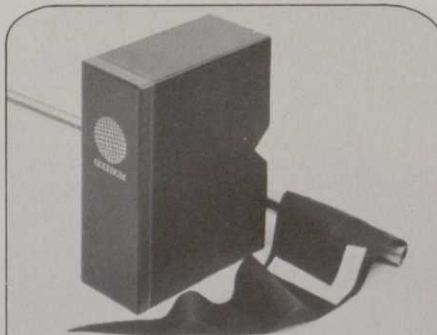
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cially and socially the most completely satisfactory first-class golf operation, or else.

Maybe it will be.

Let us pause in silent prayer for a few moments.

If, and when the USGA does put a golf course near the palatial mansion in the countryside, far from the 38th Street shadows, golf business history may be made.

The probability is that the proposed USGA course will be on nearly the most expensive acreage on which a private club ever has been constructed. Or will it be a private club?

I am for the unpaid and earnest Establishment. If I ever saw a case of the Establishment getting a wildcat by a close bite on a painfully short tail, this is it. But why worry? USGA officials in 10 or 14 years will be the ones with all the worries.

Newness of the Butler National course shows what miracles now are expected of superintendents in charge of course construction and maintenance and development of newly-built courses. Names of Fazio's construction superintendent and the superintendent who will be in charge of the Butler National course (if one has been signed) were not given in the WGA release.

Sunset Ridge CC where this year's Western Open is being played is celebrating its 50th year. It was designed by Bill Diddle. Very few alterations have been needed despite fairway watering and improved playing equipment. Dr. A. Mackenzie, who designed with Bob Jones, Augusta National, was engaged to make changes in Sunset Ridge in the 1930s, but the club then didn't have the money to do the work. Domenic Grotti is Sunset Ridge's superintendent; Bob Harris is professional and Clarence Watson is manager, a team the members rate as all-star.

This year's PGA championship at Oakland Hills CC, Birmingham, Mich., August 3 to 6, is sure to have another record-breaking gate. John T. Brennan, the club's general manager, says that the first \$100,000 in tickets were sold by the end of January. ☐