

Pro Business Shows Good Progress in 1948

By HERB GRAFFIS

This year in pro golf has been highlighted by intelligent realization that the gravy train can't be expected to run at high speed forever.

Consequently pros whose judgment and foresight have been sound through the years already have begun to make ready for keener competition on shop sales and to accent promotion of club activities in ways that should protect clubs against membership slumps of the severity that has marked previous recessions. Pros at public and fee courses also have made this year a high spot in developing the golf habit strong enough to withstand the bumps that may be expected from inflation getting too far out of bounds.

The tournament picture is being carefully revised by force of circumstances and good sense. Drastic overhauling of tournament operations was set in motion when Lawson Little resigned as chairman of the PGA rules committee in protest against laxity brought on by miserable playing conditions at some winter circuit events. Outcome of this was that the pros decided to play strictly by the USGA rules, including the USGA 14 club rule and the stymie. Definitely another result of this agreement was a more informed and closer observance of rules in the National Open and PGA championships.

Formulation of a stronger code for conduct of the tournament circuit and capable performance by George Schneider, PGA tournament bureau chmn., seem to have settled most of the tournament wrangling that was receiving unfavorable publicity. But these actions didn't solve the problem of guaranteeing to tournament sponsors all the stars the sponsors wanted for bringing in the gate.

Exhibition Schedule Heavy

And you can't blame the stars for not wanting to make all the tournaments. The

exhibition business had a big revival this year with more demands for stars than could be supplied. Nelson, Babe Zaharias and the perennial Kirkwood were booked for exhibitions virtually every day they possibly could fill. Hogan, with an unparalleled record of tournament victories this year, had far more demands for exhibitions than he could fill. Other playing pros have discussed Ben's sandwiching of exhibitions dates between selected tournament appearances as a possible reason for his consistency in winning. They also have a hunch that Hogan's net income might, by a considerable margin, have topped that of those who played more tournaments.

To October Mangrum was top tournament money winner with \$33,005 for 115 competitive rounds in all but one of the scheduled tournaments. Hogan was in second place with \$31,347 for 22 tournaments. Demaret, Locke, Alexander, Middlecoff, Palmer, Harrison, Heafner, Ghezzi and Metz follow in the order named, as men who have won more than \$10,000 in 9 months of tournament play.

Signs point to fewer of the big money tournaments in 1949 but increase of tournaments of lesser value which will draw some of the top talent and provide ample competitive and teaching training for the development of younger pros. There also will be more star exhibition matches at the ritzier clubs next year. Most of them don't want to go to the trouble of staging tournaments and haven't facilities for handling big events.

Long View of Club Pros

This year club pros have been seeing indications that they're catching up with demand for golf goods which mounted as a result of the wartime shutdown of golf manufacturing and the reconversion period at plants.

The situation which has prevailed since 1942 could have resulted in a bad slump in

the standard of pro shop service, for pros, like other sellers, wouldn't be inclined to steam-up during a sellers' market. But when the pros had to make a living on apparel, accessories and other items they could get when clubs, balls and bags weren't available, they learned plenty about buying, display, inventories, advertising and merchandising in general.

Now, prospects are that the vast increase in the postwar count of golfers over the prewar period and much larger manufacturing facilities may bring on another marketing free-for-all such as gave everybody in the golf playing equipment business headaches during bygone years.

However, as long as competition is normal to humans and is just as much to be expected in selling golf merchandise as in playing the game, the pros haven't any worries about the future that are uncommon to retail merchants.

Pros in 1948 continued to improve their shops at private and public courses. They lightened up the places with clean, neatly displayed stocks and made better use of color. Those who saw Willie Hunter's shop at Riviera during the National Open saw a typical example of a pro shop in which light, color and a large and enticing display of golf merchandise presented a valuable service to club members and a departmental operation reflecting lively character of the club.

Pros Score with Promotion

Never before have pros done a promotion job equal to that they have done this year. Particularly have they accented junior golfer development.

The PGA finally got organized on a national basis for junior promotion under the able leadership of George Lake. Lake's job in junior promotion at the Long Beach (Calif.) municipal course has been outstanding among many fine achievements by pros in attracting youngsters to the game.

The USGA's first national junior championship, record fields in the national Junior Chamber of Commerce annual junior championship, National Caddy Assn., Hearst newspapers' national junior championships and the long established Western Golf Assn. annual junior championship, together with the highly successful nation-wide high school promotion campaign conducted by the National Golf Foundation in association with the Athletic Journal, showed the juniors as sound insurance for the future of golf.

Probability is that in 1949 the Women's Western junior championship will be revived. Patty Berg returned to the Women's Western the \$500 the WWGA Open championship first prize, telling the association to use that money for promoting golf among younger girls. Patty's been doing a great job in this field herself for several years at clubs and schools.

Women's Market Brightens

Pros are getting stronger in the women's market, having definitely overcome the old handicap of being ruled out by many women who thought that pro prices for clubs were too high and quality of accessories too uncertain.

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After the Battle at Gettysburg



Where the Blue and the Gray met at Gettysburg, Pa., in one of history's decisive battles there's recently been opened one of the most attractive 9-hole clubs in the United States.

Gettysburg CC acquired ground and buildings for \$45,000 and spent \$5,000 in renovating and furnishing the buildings as clubhouse and pro shop. Nine hole course with fairway watering, and large

practice putting greens were built for \$45,000. A member in the road building business loaned the club earth moving equipment which reduced costs on the course construction job. Course is 3080 yds., with 35 par.

Advice of Dr. Al Cooper of Penn State college, helped club get greens, fairway and tee turf in excellent condition for a new course.

Construction Improvements Suggested by Supts.

By: W. E. LANGTON • CHESTER MENDENHALL • WILLIAM SMART
AL LINKOGEL • GEORGE KNOX • EMIL MASHIE • W. H. "BILL" JOHNSON

Many of the maintenance troubles on golf courses are caused by original defects in construction. When the courses were built their construction possibly was the best that the current practice could devise, or it could have been that the necessity of speed and cost cutting by the builder accounted for faulty construction that has been causing trouble and money every year since.

Tremendous advances in turf maintenance knowledge have been made since the 20's when the majority of first class U.S. courses were built or altered in major respects. This progress has provided a foundation for new construction that many clubs believe should not be postponed any longer. Heavier play, mechanical maintenance, longer season and the tendency in numerous cases to do away with the old style tough rough, new watering, fertilizing and chemical weed eliminating practices also have had effect in dictating course modernization.

GOLFDOM queried men well known for their work in course maintenance to tell from observation of needs at their own and other courses what reconstruction work they consider would improve the maintenance and playing conditions.

Their replies, together with many other comments GOLFDOM has received from course superintendents and green chairmen, show there's a great deal of work that needs to be done on first class courses before they can be regarded as being in up-to-date condition.

Especially interesting is the comment from W. E. Langton, veteran supt. of the San Gabriel (Calif.) CC. Langton thinks of the present situation as a reminder that in planning work for the immediate needs one must look far ahead with foresight that was not used when much of the existing course construction was done. The developments of the past two decades in course design, construction and maintenance have been so pronounced that any old-timer in golf scarcely would have imagined, 20 years ago, that these advances would be made.

Langton says:

"The subject of reconstruction or im-

provements to existing courses is both interesting and instructive to those who wish for the advance of the science of greenkeeping. If our foresight were as good as our hindsight, there would be no necessity for writing this. But we all make mistakes and many errors have been made both in construction and maintenance. You pertinently ask the question, 'What would you do if you had to build the courses over again?' I would first of all try to visualize or make some kind of a forecast of what improvements in machinery are likely to take place during the next decade. For instance if we could have foreseen only 40 years ago, powerful tractors hauling seven 30 in. cutting units around with ease and proficiency that is really astounding, we would have changed much of the old type of construction to meet this modern piece of machinery.

"Those who will live during the next 40 years will no doubt witness even greater improvements in our cutting machinery than we have seen in the past, so if I had to build our course over again, I would see that every foot of ground was made available for the use of this improved machinery. I would eliminate all steep grades wherever possible, especially around traps and do away with all hand labor to lessen costs and secure greater efficiency, and then I would fill up many unsightly holes in the ground we mis-name traps. I never could see any beauty in a hole in the ground with a few loads of sand thrown in to punish some poor dub who unfortunately got his ball in the hole. These holes are both ugly and costly, for after all, sand traps are the most costly item to maintain in proper condition, more so than any other item on a golf course.

"I know at the San Gabriel CC, for every two hours we spend in cutting and taking care of greens, five hours are spent in cleaning and raking sand traps. A few clumps of trees placed at strategic positions could take the place of these holes and would be even more punishment to those who stray from the straight and narrow path.

"It may be a delightful feeling to wit-

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ness one's opponent blasting away his hopes and desires out of some infernal hole in the ground, but at least we can fill some of them up, add beauty to our courses and impart a little more peace and serenity to our family of golfers.

"Had we foreseen wars, depressions, inflated prices and high wages, there are many things we would have done to lessen costs. We should have installed a good irrigation system when labor and material was cheap. That installation alone would have reduced our irrigation costs by over 75%. But our vision of the future was poor. We could not see that labor would advance three times and material costs somewhere near the same rates. But in those good old days labor was cheap and plentiful and material could be had in any quantity and it seemed to us then that it was cheaper and just as efficient to engage labor and buy hose and sprinklers than it was to put in a proper underground irrigation system. But we can see our mistakes now and we certainly have to pay for our lack of foresight and business acumen. With high labor and material costs it would pay to install an irrigation system even now if material was available.

"Another thing I would do if I had to redesign our greens: I would give each green more putting surface. It seems to me to be a great waste of time and effort to design a 3,000 sq. ft. of green and have available only 800 to 1,000 ft. of real putting surface. Those excessively contoured greens may be very beautiful to look at, and satisfy our artistic sense, but unless they give us a maximum amount of utilitarian value the time spent in construction and maintenance is both costly and wasteful. There are so many things one would do if one had to do the things over again. I would build larger tees, and greater parking areas, but the most important of all is to have vision to foresee the evolution that is likely to take place in the near future."

Chester Mendenhall, supt., Mission Hills CC (Kansas City dist.) and pres., Green-keeping Supts. Assn. of America, stresses manual labor as far as is compatible with first class turf condition in modernizing a course for good play on a wasteless budget. Mendenhall says of the changes he would make at Mission Hills:

"Mission Hills course was constructed 34 years ago, so the original design of the greens was rather crude. The layout of fairways is about the same as the original design but the greens have all been changed, one or two at a time. Most of the redesigning has been done by the various greenkeepers who have been in charge of the course.

"The greens all have good surface drainage and most of them are tiled and have a very good soil mixture that drains well.

"Here are a few of the things I would change if I were rebuilding the course: Three greens had cinder mixed in the top soil for drainage at the time of construction. There are so many cinders that you have to sharpen the hole cutter after changing these three cups. I would re-surface these three greens.

"We still have a few bunkers that are too sharp for mowing with a tractor. If I were improving the course, I would eliminate all banks that could not be mowed with a tractor.

"Some tees are located where they can not be enlarged to sufficient size. They should be relocated.

"The watering system I installed myself and I made some mistakes. It is a cast iron snap valve job with all the main lines of 6 in. pipe. All fairway valves are set on 3 in. or larger with 2 in. lines up to the edge of all greens and tees. There are two and three valves at all greens with one valve in the middle of each tee and they are watered with a short hose and sprinkler. Here is the worst mistake. We used small valves at the tees and greens.

"If I were putting in another system I would use the same size valves all the way through. Then always use the greens' hose and sprinklers to water spots on fairways that need extra water.

"I think all courses have areas on fairways that require more water than the rest of the fairway and they are generally situated so that if one tries to water them with the large fairway sprinkler, he will be over-watering some of the area covered by the sprinkler."

Wm. Smart, supt., Dutchess G&CC, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., is a son of the late J. M. Smart who had a notable career in advancing course maintenance standards. Bill says he testifies more as a "working foreman" than as a course supt. on construction problems that need quick attention. However he believes that some of the jobs at Dutchess probably are typical of what needs attention at many other courses.

Smart writes:

"With the increased play of the past few seasons I find that our tees (built 20 to 30 years ago) do not have enough playing area. This will be remedied by completely renovating and enlarging the present tees. Three of our present tees were built on a base of stones. That is, the kind of stones that are common in stone walls in this section. I find that



Gene Littler draws Lincoln's biggest gallery for a golf event during final tournament round of the USJCC National Junior Amateur Championship at Country Club of Lincoln (Nebr.). 168 boys from 35 states teed off for the qualifying round by virtue of having won in local and state Jaycee sponsored tournaments from a field of more than 8,000 junior linksmen.

these tees are very hard to keep grass on during the usual summer dry spells. To make matters worse, chipmunks and mice burrow down and make their nests in the hollows in the stone. We eliminated the mice with a 20% AWTU powder. Developed by the government during the war, it's mighty potent stuff on the short tail mice we have. I haven't tried it on the chipmunks as yet, but I have every reason to expect the same results on them.

"As a result of the heavy traffic we have also had to put 'pop ups' in the tees. A few of our tees had old model 'pop ups' in them but they can't begin to compare with the newer designs in nozzles and construction.

"In the past we have had trouble (and complaints) with the steps up to our higher tees. These were just cedar or locust posts laid down and staked with pipe. They were very hard to maintain because of settling, unsightly weeds and grass and the wear and tear from spikes. A few near accidents and we had to go to work on them. Railroad ties sawed in half did the job beautifully. Digging out the old steps, putting in 54 half ties and tamping them in took five men the better part of a day. The steps are now uniform to look at and as safe as steps can be made. The only maintenance will be a yard of fill and a tamping each spring.

"For many years we have used small Fairbanks Morse pumps for our water supply. Although good pumps, one feature caused many lost man hours and loss of full water pressure. For a cooling system the pumps have a 3 or 4 gallon water

hopper over and around the piston walls. Within an hour or two after starting this water would be boiling and eventually would boil away. The result of this was that the pump (or rather the motor) needed constant attention. Sometimes the men would forget it and the pump would overheat and stall. This was remedied by drilling a hole in the hopper at the water line and inserting a half inch copper tube for a run off. Then a slight trickle of water was allowed to run into the hopper by means of a hose from the outside tap. Now we can start the pump, lock the pump house and forget it. The length of running time is regulated by the amount of gasoline put in the tank."

Teamwork for Supt. and Architect

Al Linkogel, noted in central states for his performance as supt. at Westwood CC (St. Louis dist.), says that in too much of the alteration and completely new course construction fundamental errors will continue to be made because of lack of close association and consultation between the architect and greenkeeper.

It is Linkogel's observation that the greenkeeper should be hired before construction begins on a new course and before plans are approved for alteration the greenkeeper should go over them in considerable detail and with deliberation, together with the architect.

Al points out that on any number of courses par three greens are located in the lowest spots of the entire area where air and water drainage is bad. The greens normally get hard wear from play and

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STRAIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE

BY A.G.S.

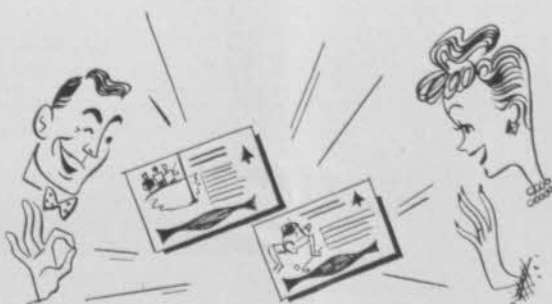


THE big picture you see in the column this month is exactly what you think it is... a dozen Spalding Golf Balls all dressed up with *someplace* to go. Yes, that's the way they'll look when they move off your counter into the hands of the many, many members who know the gift which will be most appreciated—as well as those harassed individuals who just “didn't know what to give good friends at Christmas.”





YOU'LL actually be performing a service to your members by letting them know about these gift-boxed Spalding Golf Balls. Saves their fighting big crowds in the stores... solves their Christmas problem neatly and easily with a gift that's sure to be appreciated by anyone who ever tours a course. And naturally, you'll be building *extra* business for yourself as well.



AND speaking of building business... have you seen the Christmas cards Spalding is making available to you this year? Designed for you to send out to your members, they're timely reminders that your Pro Shop is headquarters for golf gifts of *all* kinds at Christmas time. One card for men... one card for women... they'll be welcomed by everyone who just can't think what to give relatives or business acquaintances. And they'll boost your income during the Christmas season!

SPALDING

SETS THE PACE



IN SPORTS

A. G. SPALDING & BROS., INC.

Tribute Paid "The Haig"

Michigan pros and amateurs staged the second Walter Hagen Day golf tournament and dinner at Blythfield CC, Grand Rapids, Mich., Sept. 8 with 150 playing golf through an afternoon rain and 200 at the dinner.

History was made in one respect at the party. The Haig arrived a day early. But, as Horton Smith remarked in his dinner speech, Walter's tardiness often



"The Haig" presents the Walter Hagen Trophy to Horton Smith (left), winner of the tournament event, as host professional Marv Stahl looks on. Nearly 200 attended the second annual Hagen Day sponsored by the Michigan section of the PGA at Blythfield CC, Grand Rapids.

was exaggerated and usually was caused by his reluctance to shake off fellows who were imposing on his good nature, and get going.

Pros and amateurs at the affair frequently commented that it would be fitting for the PGA to make Hagen Day a national event for pros and amateurs. The Haig pioneered in emancipating pros from the caste system and in introducing them to big money. Walter's met a million people and has been a pro good-will messenger to them all.

Walter's feats were related by Joe Kirkwood, Al Watrous, Horton Smith, Sam Byrd and others, and The Haig in a genial "tells all" talk sifted facts from legends.

Maurie Wells, speaking for Michigan PGA members, told about Walter as a famous star visiting home club pros, making them up to their members. Detroit golf writers, Drukenbrod, Walter Martin and Dann, recited incidents of Walter's cheer-

fulness in helping writers and photographers cover their assignments.

Kid Field for Hagen

Byrd said that Ruth and Hagen were his boyhood idols and Sammy figured he'd been lucky to be close to both his heroes. Byrd hit a serious note that registered with Walter when Sam expressed the opinion that Ruth's passing left open a big field for a top sports notable to carry on the work for boys that Ruth had engaged in actively prior to his last illness. That highly responsible job now calls for Hagen, said Byrd.

Telegrams from Walter, Jr. and one Walter, Jr. ghosted for Walter III, were intimate endorsements of Byrd's suggestion.

Leon Blodgett, Blythfield pres., in welcoming The Haig and other guests, said Walter had sparked golf's big boom and had led in making the game an American national pastime. He remarked that Hagen's leadership had not only brought professionals into rich fields but had been a powerful advertising factor in making golf clubs a billion dollar investment for fun.

Hagen Reflects Pro Affability

Herb Graffis, GOLFDOM's editor, as toastmaster, voiced the conviction that pros in honoring Hagen honor themselves as The Haig's kindness and eagerness to see everybody enjoy themselves is a reflection of the professional golfers' attitude generally.

In the golf part of the celebration Horton Smith's 69 gave evidence that the Joplin Ghost who acquired considerable of his talent while touring with The Haig, could be on the verge of revival as a tournament contender. Second in the pro class was John Barnum, recent graduate from amateur ranks, with 70. Tied for amateur honors at 71 were Ken Beukema of Blythfield and Mike Heimler of Muskegon.

A tragic accident occurred, unknown to the diners, outside the Blythfield club gates when Mrs. Minnie Traulsen, 62, housekeeper for the family of Marvin Stahl, Blythfield pro, was killed by automobiles after alighting from a bus and attempting to cross the road during the rain. Another tragedy was missed only by luck when a speeding car skidded into the car driven by Joe Kirkwood outside Benton Harbor. Kirkwood, his wife and twin sons were badly shaken and the Kirkwood Cadillac was caved in.