

Defects Show Up

# Lack of Good Management Hurts Development of New Courses

By HERB GRAFFIS

ONE OF the pro businessmen whose earnings from his golf club operations have exceeded the top figures of tournament golfers the past few years looks at the current boom in golf and says: "There is one glaring fault. Without exception every new course opens before it is completed. The result is that it never gets into first class condition.

"In many cases new courses actually aren't fit to play when they are opened," the pro continues. "Supts. of these courses have to perform miracles. They are the unsung geniuses who are the salvation of most of the new course ventures, especially the subdivision-golf course deals in which the promoters have made a good profit and are ready to move along when sales are slowing down. Then nobody knows who is going to provide the money needed for course maintenance and finishing the construction work.

## Inadequate Funds

"At the majority of the new courses supts., mgrs. and professionals are trying to please the eager members of new clubs and haven't funds adequate for the work," says the pro.

"Speaking from the professional's viewpoint, very few of the new jobs are worth tackling. The promoters are so hard up they are bleeding in every department. They've made promises that haven't been kept. In instances of large promotions, a quantity of memberships has been over-sold and quality undersold. That doesn't leave much of a market for pro services and equipment.

"Yet, although a pro as a businessman ought to know enough to investigate and

get the business picture at the new club there are plenty of fellows bidding for these positions where there isn't a chance to make much of a living."

Continuing, the pro says: "there never was a time in the history of the golf business when there was such a need for business knowledge to keep the growth of the game sound. Recently I spent four hours with the architect, supt. and general mgr. of a new club. The mgr. is financially interested in the club and wants to open it when it is only partially completed. Somebody figured wrong (or not at all) and the result is the deal needs fresh money desperately.

"I was called in by the architect, with the supt's knowledge. The general mgr. didn't know who brought me in although he was the one I was expected to help most.

## Where Shortage Lies

"We talk about the shortage of golf courses but we don't mention the shortage of golf business brains."

This professional is well known for his bluntness as well as his financial success. Maybe he is inclined to be a bit too critical of the planning and management of many of the newer clubs, but there are points in his observations and warnings that are going to make some men wealthy in the golf business and result in the bankruptcy of others.

This critic is right (according to our observation) about new clubs opening too soon. Soil preparation programs and complete watering systems often reduce the time required for getting a course into satisfactory playing condition but the calendar can't be squeezed in getting turf on

any country club golf course.

In smaller towns, practice ranges and greens keep the members interested. Small town golfers don't expect the superlative condition that metropolitan district golfers expect for their money on a new course.

### Forced Club Opening

The premature opening usually is forced by poor financial planning and an impractical membership plan and solicitation.

Already some danger spots in a few of the new club plans are showing up. Among these flaws are:

- Sale of too many memberships. With a big increase in women's play, an 18 hole private club course with 500 or more family memberships is bound to be as crowded as any heavily-played public course.

- Sale of too many "life" memberships. This class of membership reduces the annual dues revenue that a club has to have.

- Skimping on course construction so any sort of a course can be put in and bordering lots sold. Already this skimping is calling for correction. If the subdividers haven't got the lots sold they are paying the reconstruction costs. If the subdividers have sold enough property to pass the course and its troubles along to the property owners, the latter has an expense that wasn't contemplated.

- Lack of adequate equipment, materials and money to care for the new course and bring it into first class condition.

### Lack of Management

But most of all, the lack at the new courses is competent planning and management. This shortage is no novelty. In the '20s when there was a big golf boom going, and the same sort of golf course-subdivision projects born that we are seeing started by the hundreds during the current periods of golf development, the failures were due to lack of qualified management with only a few exceptions.

Lawyers and real estate men are most prominent in current club promotion operations. A few pros have small speaking parts as "advisors." In only two of these cases that we know of were the "advisors" acquainted with the financial situations of the projects. In both cases the deals weren't getting along too well and the pros were called in to help get operations stabilized.

There are several cases of big financial interests being engaged in subdivision-golf operations. Tax-wise these deals are attractive to wealthy men. The weak spot is shortage of competent planning, management and operating personnel. One

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### Foundation to Move Offices

In September, offices of the National Golf Foundation will be moved to the Merchandise Mart (Room 804), Chicago 54. The new phone number will be WHitehall 4-3564. The Foundation is moving from its present location at 407 S. Dearborn st., Chicago.

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big money interest has selected a golf club development organization to handle its golf-subdivision investments.

### High Pressure Sales

Membership sales campaigns puzzle many new clubs. High-pressure selling jobs by commission salesmen rarely fit the requirements of a good private club built for a rather select membership. The answer to the membership sales problem, like the solutions of other problems of the new clubs, lies in business management that can plan a membership sales campaign and get the members to work on it.

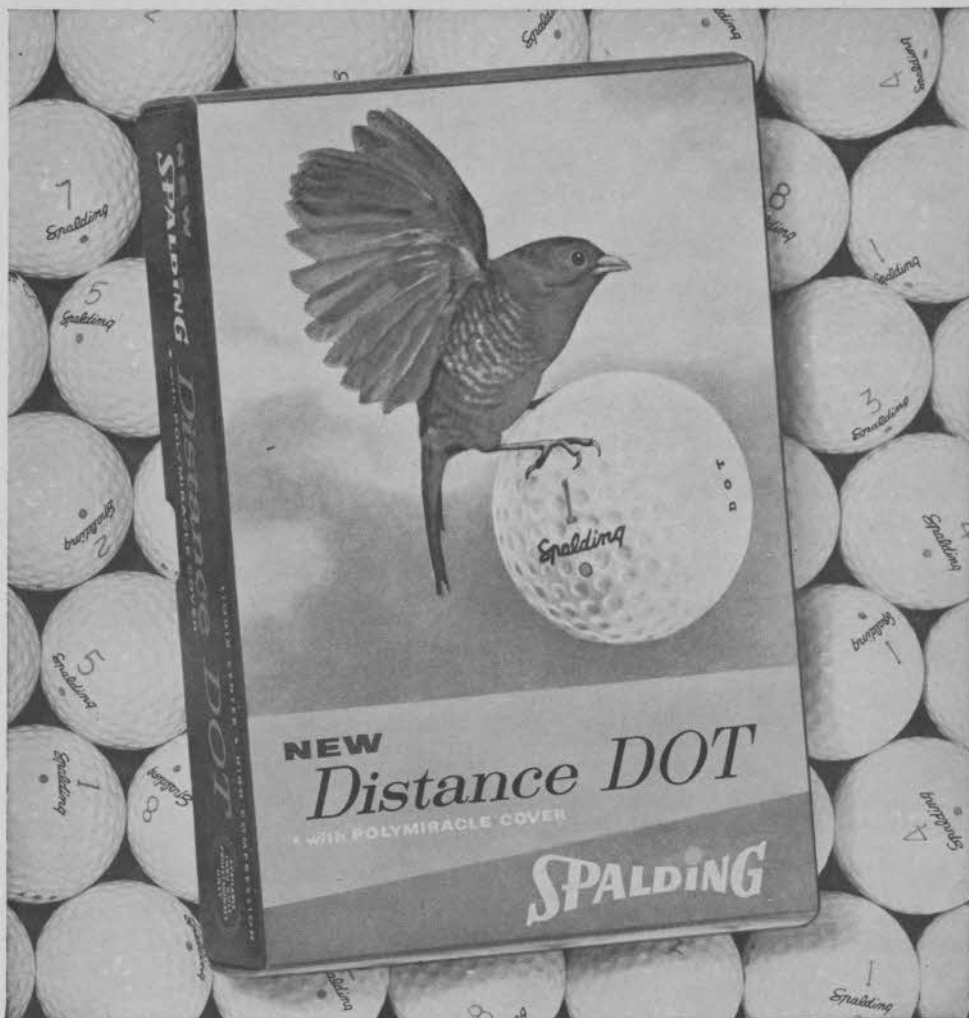
The owner of a large piece of land in a metropolitan area told us that in looking for someone to convert part of the property into a golf club and operate it he wasn't able to get anybody he thought was qualified to do the job. However, he could find several persons qualified to sell building sites bordering the proposed course. This property owner has been president of a prominent golf club. He said:

"Golf business education, such as it is, is specialized to the degree that I can't get a man to build and run a golf business.

"I can get good men for building and maintaining a course. I can get good men for teaching and running a pro shop. I can get good men for running the clubhouse.

"But what I can't get and want is a man to prepare a financially sound plan for a club, who can organize and supervise a financially sound plan for a club, who can look at a monthly statement and see just where the operation stands and what is needed, who can decide what publicity is needed and direct it, and who can get the right men for building and maintaining the course, the clubhouse and the pro department.

"I've come to the conclusion that golf club mgrs., supts. and professionals need to know more than most of them do about the overall picture of club financial operations and the operations of depts other than their own."



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## Texas Club Introduces New Membership Plan

A new idea in the country club membership setup is going to be carried out at Lake Whitney CC in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. Construction of the course, designed by Ralph Plummer, is expected to start soon.

All memberships in the club will be company memberships. These will be transferable with the only stipulation being that Lake Whitney must approve the transferee.

A company membership may be held by any individual, company, firm or corporation. Subsidiary, related or wholly owned companies each will be required to take out separate memberships. After a



Architects drawing of Lake Whitney recreation area

firm has joined the club, it may designate as many of its executives as it so desires who are acceptable to the club as participating members. Cost of company memberships are on a sliding scale which is based on the number of persons it employs. Monthly dues will be scaled in the same manner.

### Fees and Dues

Charter membership fees have been established in this manner: For 1 to 25 company employees — \$500; 26 to 100 — \$625; 101 to 500 — \$750; 501 or more — \$1,000. Monthly dues will range from \$18 to \$36 and will be based on the above employee figures. Lake Whitney's sponsors have emphasized that the fees and dues setup will in no way be determined by the number of participating members designated by a company. If, for example, a firm has only 20 employees but designates 10 participating members it will pay less in fees and dues than another company with 99 employees and only five participating members.

The Lake Whitney plan calls for the

participating member not to be responsible for fees or dues but only for his individual charges.

The thinking behind the Lake Whitney plan is predicated upon the belief that membership in a country club financed by a company promotes good employer-employee relations and is an important executive benefit. It also is pointed out that under present circumstances, budget limitations and tax policies prevent many firms from providing more than only a few club memberships for its key executives or employees.

### Built by Army Engineers

Lake Whitney was created by the damming of the Brazos River and covers an area of about 25 sq. miles. It was completed by 1953 by the U. S. Corps of Engineers. The lake is located 76 miles from Dallas, 56 from Ft. Worth and 51 from Waco.

Present plans call for the country club to have in addition to the golf course a clubhouse, activities center, tennis courts, landing strip, small boat docks, boat launching, large boat and yacht docks, bridle paths and a sand beach.

Organizers of the club are Col. Henry R. Dutton, Ft. Worth; O. T. Smyth, Cleburne, Tex.; Ragsdale Stratton, Dallas; and Charles G. Murray, Whitney, Tex.

## Employees Play Free at One of Four Company Courses

A survey of 107 company owned golf courses made by the National Industrial Recreation association in conjunction with the National Golf Foundation shows that play on about 25 per cent of these courses is free for employees. About half charge green fees, averaging \$1 on weekdays and \$2 on weekends, and the balance has a family membership arrangement averaging about \$33 per family.

Not all the courses are owned by large companies. Five are owned by industries with less than 500 employees and another four firms have from 500 to 1,000 employees. About 50 per cent of the industrial courses have been built in the post-war era and at the present time there are 15 more in construction or planning stages.

Most companies that have their own courses say there is a twofold reason: They want to keep present employees happy and golf courses are of great value in attracting competent newcomers.

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# Open Million \$ Cobb County Recreation Center in October

By **HARRY C. ECKHOFF**

Eastern Field Representative,  
National Golf Foundation

Cobb County (Ga.) will accomplish its goal of providing a \$1 million recreation center for its citizens when the O. B. Keeler 18-hole course, complete with practice green and driving range, is dedicated in Oct. The recreation park which consists of 500 acres near Kennesaw, includes a swimming pool built to Olympic specifications and a spacious clubhouse which were opened to the public on June 5.

Future planned developments include picnic areas, tennis courts, boating, nature study areas and a kiddieland. A portion of the acreage is being divided into choice building sites (master plan calls for 450 lots). According to the Cobb County Recreation Authority, receipts from the sales of the home sites will offset the cost of the project. Thus, the complete recreation center will be made available at no cost to the taxpayer.

## No Tax Money

Construction of Cobb County's magnificent park was financed through revenue bonds totaling one million dollars through a Minneapolis, Minnesota insurance company and will be repaid by the Recreation Authority over a 30-year period. Funds to repay this bond loan will come from revenues such as green fees, concessions, swimming pool admissions and the sale of building lots in and around the park. No tax money has been used in expediting the park plans to date. Many persons believe the center will be self sustaining and at the same time provide needed funds for future expansion.

Nearly six years of planning went into the project. The idea for this park came when a large number of golfers, who found Atlanta courses and other neighboring links too crowded to play, began asking, "why doesn't a fast growing county such as Cobb have its own course?" These golfers will have their dream come true when the 18-hole par 72, 7080-yard course Chic Adams designed and built officially opens. Sam Snead, Arnold Palmer and Louise Suggs have accepted invitations to participate in the dedication program.

The Cobb County Recreation project (master plan prepared by the Charles M.



Master plan of Cobb County recreation center.

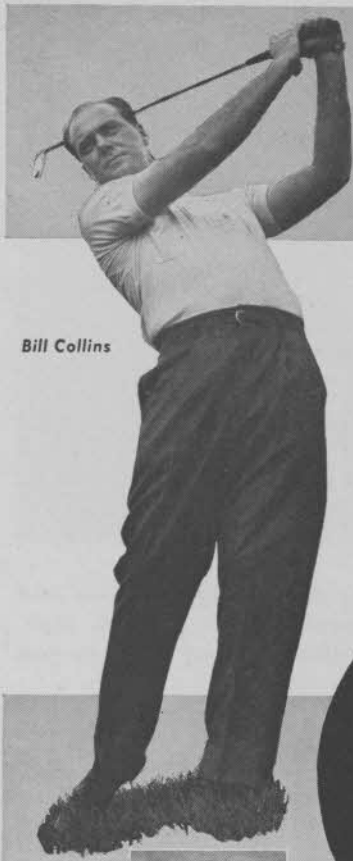
Graves Organization of Atlanta) is one of the most extensive county recreation operations in the entire Eastern Seaboard area. Numerous counties are now operating golf courses. Among them are Westchester County, N. Y.; Bergen, Essex, Mercer, Passaic, Union and Somerset — all in New Jersey, and Allegheny, Pennsylvania. Montgomery County, Maryland, has an 18-hole course under construction. While municipal golf courses (city, county and state operated) comprise only 13 per cent of the overall total in the U. S. they get about 40 per cent of total play.

## Harman With Green Section

Raymond E. (Dutch) Harman has been appointed to the USGA Northeastern Dist. green section staff. He is well known among supts. in the New Jersey-Metropolitan area as a result of his interest in golf turf while serving as a county agent in Essex County, N. J. In addition to having wide knowledge of turf, Harman is an expert in plant materials and ornamental plantings.

## National Recreation Congress

The 42nd National Recreation congress will be held at the Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D. C., Sept. 25-29. It is sponsored by the American Recreation Society and National Recreation Assn.



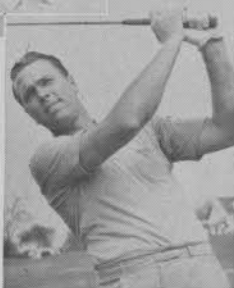
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# WATERING SYSTEM

*If you're in the market for an irrigation layout and aren't familiar with water requirements, pumps, pipe, costs, etc., this article should be of value to you*

**By GEORGE RUDGE**

Mgr., Turf Watering Systems  
Carlson Products Corp., Aurora, O.

At first glance the job of buying a turf-watering system for your course may seem extremely complicated, but two steps will help you simplify the technicalities and make a sound decision.

First, use the help offered by architects, consultants, manufacturers and engineers who specialize in the water systems field. These companies and their representatives have a stake in the success of your turf-watering system. There are so many "ifs" in any course watering system that you will need the aid of people who know their business.

Second, to get maximum benefits from your installed system, try to provide the best information you can on soil conditions and topography of your course.

### Check on Surveys

First of all you will need either a survey or an aerial photograph. Surveys may have already been made by your county agricultural agent or another government agency, saving you the expense. Federal power agencies or the geodetic survey may

also have made them.

Frequently you will find that your state industrial commission or chamber of commerce has aerial photographs which are usable. If you have to have one taken, the cost should be about \$100. Be sure that it is taken vertically to avoid distortion. Also be sure that it shows a landmark which you can use to establish map-scale. Your automobile mileage-gauge is a good way to measure the distance, for instance, between two indicated road intersections.

### Soil Analysis

An analysis of soil is important because percolation rate and water retention properties will affect the rates at which your system should supply water. Analysis can be obtained from your state university agriculture department or from your county agent for a small fee.

Once you have provided basic information to prospective bidders they will begin to prepare their proposals for you. The next step, that of evaluating the proposals, is the most important one you'll perform.

If you and your green committee members will ask yourselves three basic questions about each proposal you will be well on your way to a satisfactory watering



system. The questions are:

1. Is the initial cost economical?
2. Will operating costs be economical?
3. Will the proposed system satisfy moisture requirements necessary for establishment and maintenance of excellent turf under the most extreme conditions?

The answers are not difficult to get if you remember that the watering system is only a part of the complete turf program. Step-by-step consideration of all the elements will bring you to a commonsense decision.

#### Ask Some Questions

Following are the things that you should ask your representatives to explain to you about the proposals they give you:

1. How do their costs compare with those submitted in other proposals?
2. What are estimated operating costs for water and electricity?
3. What are operating costs for labor?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the type of pump recommended for use with this system? (This is a complicated subject on which you may want to have the opinion of a pump specialist.)

Any watering system is made up of a number of components. From all possible combinations you must select the two or three that most closely serve your needs. The following brief studies will tell you some of the things to look for in discussing various proposals with your committee and the representatives who developed them for you.

#### Water Requirements

Water requirements vary with seasons and the geographical location of your course. During periods of drought in most areas you will want a system with capacity to apply one acre-in. of water during every five day period. An acre-in. is about 27,000 gallons of water: one inch of water distributed over an acre area.

This rate is for fairways. It is determined by soil percolation rate and retention properties. The objective is to maintain optimum growth conditions in the top 8 to 10 ins. of the soil. This, in conjunction with a well planned turf program, will offer maximum area for the development of root depth and mass. This greater area will result in more efficient use of fertilizers and inherent nutrients.

If water is applied too fast, or if the soil percolation rate is too rapid, fertilizer and nutrients will "leach" through the root-growth depth too quickly to be of full benefit to the turf. If application or

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## Architects Hold First Summer Conference in Quebec

The first summer meeting of the American Society of Golf Course Architects was held at Lachute G&CC, Lachute, Quebec, June 27-29. The group gathered to prepare material for general distribution acquainting the public with the character of the services offered by members. Proper planning of golf courses from selection of site to the final stage of development is essential not only to the creation of courses of character but to an efficient economical operation.

The architects discussed the proper integration of the valuable services of specialists such as agronomists and engineers who, without due regulation, defeat the creation of sound courses and often increase construction costs materially.

Members of the society, it was brought out, have spent a lifetime in the acquisition of their experience and skills without which courses of merit cannot be economically created. The retention of designers who are not completely qualified is certain to result in unnecessary expense, poor layouts and general dissatisfaction, the architects agreed.

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percolation is too slow, only the top 2 or 3 ins. of soil will maintain the proper moistness. The resultant shallow-rooted turf then becomes much more vulnerable to heat and disease.

#### Consider Greens Separately

The watering of greens should get separate considerations since they are different in construction from fairways. In most cases a top layer of specially composed soil (varying amounts of sand, loam, peat moss and other materials) is placed over a drainage bed of gravel. Below the gravel bed may be a special drainage system of drain pipe.

The whole construction is designed to permit rapid percolation of excess water, allowing only minimal amounts to be retained in the soil layer. This necessitates daily or bi-daily doses of water to maintain the soil moisture content. In an effort to keep greens green, it probably is a universal practice (although unintentional) to apply more water than is actually needed: If good drainage is not provided, this type of saturation may sour the soil,

*(Continued on page 67)*

## Chick Evans Honored at \$70 A Plate Dinner

More than 1,000 people, including 500-ex caddies, attended the testimonial dinner held July 18th in the grand ballroom of Chicago's Conrad Hilton hotel for Charles G. (Chick) Evans, called "the greatest friend a caddie ever had."

The occasion was Chick's 70th birthday and persons attending the gala affair paid \$70 a plate for the privilege of paying tribute to one of the great amateurs of U. S. golf. Fittingly enough, proceeds of the dinner were turned over to the Evans Caddie Scholarship Fund.

A total of 984 boys have earned college scholarships since Chick and his mother established the plan about 40 years ago. It is administered by the Western Golf Assn.

Of the 500 ex-caddies who attended the Evans dinner, about 400 have finished

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Chick Evans was born in Indianapolis, July 18, 1890 and moved to Chicago as a youngster. He won his first tournament in 1907 — the Chicago Amateur. In 1916 he won the National Open with the then record score of 286. Five years later he finished fourth in this event. Chick won the U. S. Amateur in 1916 and again in 1920. He was Amateur runnerup in 1912, 1922 and 1927 and a semi-finalist in five other years. Evans won the Western Open in 1910 and the Western Amateur seven times after finishing as runnerup in 1910. He was on three Walker Cup teams — in 1922, 1924 and 1928. He still competes in the USGA Amateur.

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their schooling and the remainder are enrolled in undergraduate or post-graduate schools throughout the country.

Chick was introduced to the banquet throng by James L. O'Keefe, a past pres. of WGA, who was master of ceremonies at the birthday celebration.

### Tremendous Gesture

In acknowledging the thoughtful turnout of hundreds of his friends, Evans said: "The idea of this tremendous gesture on the part of so many wonderful friends gives me the first tee jitters. This will mean a significant contribution of sorely needed money for the caddie scholarship program. It is the finest birthday present a man could receive."



*Formica Corp. photo*

Charles G. (Chick) Evans (l) looks over table with signatures of 350 Evans Scholars which was presented to him at testimonial dinner. With him are James M. Royer (center), pres. of Western Golf Assn. and Horton Smith.

Gifts received by Chick included a coffee service inscribed with the names of all Evans scholars and alumni and a portrait of himself done by Thomas Stephens. The latter has painted portraits of Bob Jones, Francis Ouimet, Glenna Collett Vare, Walter Hagen and Gene Sarazen, all of which hang in the Golf House gallery of the USGA in New York.

Carlton Blunt, past pres. of WGA and largely responsible for the building of the Evans Scholarship headquarters in Golf, Ill., presented the Evans portrait to John D. Ames, past pres. of the USGA for hanging in the Golf House gallery.

### Rawls in Hall of Fame

Betsy Rawls, four times winner of the Women's Open, has been named to the Ladies PGA Hall of Fame. She is the 12th woman to become so honored, joining Glenna Collett Vare, Joyce Wethered, Alexia S. Fraser, Virginia Van Wie, Beatrice Hoyt, Margaret Curtis, Dorothy C. Hurd, Babe Zaharias, Patty Berg, Louise Suggs and Betty Jameson.

### PGA Press Booklet

For press, radio and TV, the PGA recently released a booklet, "Golf and the PGA Professional," which explains the principal activities of the organization, what it does for the pro, the amateur and the game in general. It was prepared by the PGA public relations dept. in cooperation with the present officers.