

# GOLF COURSES

## With A Profit Motive

*A well known architect discusses eight points that should be considered when a fee course is being planned*

By **GEOFFREY S. CORNISH**

Golf Course Architect  
Amherst, Mass.

**B**ecause of the immense demand by the public for fee type golf there is greater emphasis this year than ever before on construction of profit-motive courses.

This trend is further accelerated by the availability of federal funds for the financing of certain golf facilities. Harry Eckhoff, Eastern field director of the National Golf Foundation, described these funds in an article in the March issue of *GOLFDOM*. (page 160).

Individuals and corporations contemplating profit motive golf ventures are confronted with many problems or questions, each of which requires an early decision. These decisions may affect the entire future of the project. Unfortunately they have to be reached early in the planning stages despite meagerness of data pertaining to them. Several of these problems are discussed hereunder to assist future owners in reaching decisions.

A graph is also provided to show prospective owners the relation between maintenance standards and gross income on several 18 hole layouts.

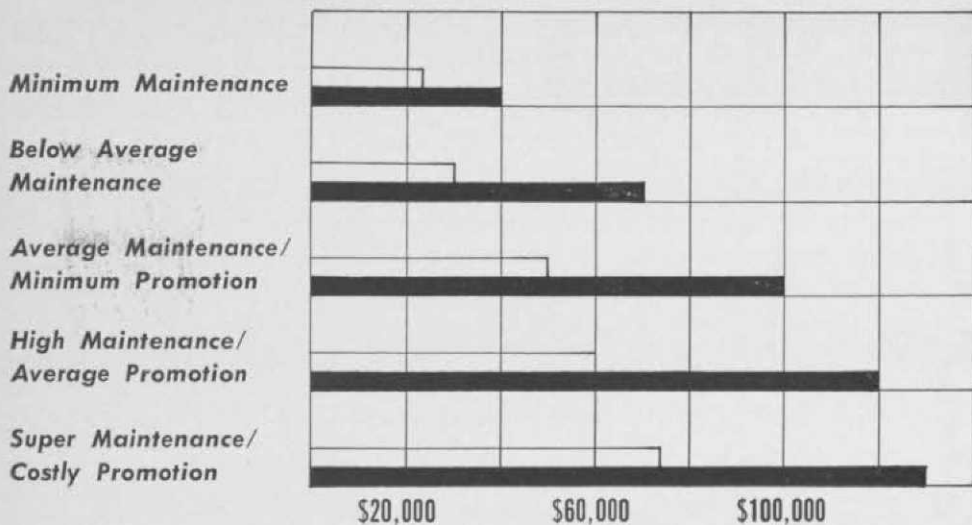
### Will the Saturation Point Be Reached?

If we ever reach this point, it is a long time off. The more courses the more interest is generated in the game. Each time a new course is opened, more people start to play regularly and those that have been playing play more often. Personally, I do not think we have even scratched the surface in new course construction.

For example, in the 15 mile stretch



from Providence, R. I. to Fall River, Mass., there was only one fee-type course as recently as 1954. Today I know of seven. All are crowded. On Saturdays, Sundays and holidays long waits are encountered at starting tees.



Maintenance/promotion costs—White Bar  
Gross Income from green fees—Black Bar

Incidentally, the increasing number of fee courses leads to a greater demand for member owned country clubs because a portion of the newcomers to the game decide they would like a private club of their own.

Although competition can actually help the majority of fee courses, the operator who mines his facilities without putting anything back into them except minimum maintenance is sure to encounter severe trouble from competition sooner or later. Conversely, the operator who spends huge sums of money wastefully without getting value for his money can also encounter trouble.

**Elaborate or Modest Course:** Since a broad section of the population is interested in fee type golf we find both the modest and elaborate layouts crowded today. But the elaborate course can command higher greens fees and is therefore the greater money maker.

Still the initial outlay of the latter is greater and many individuals contemplating building a course have to content themselves with the modest type. Indeed, such courses operated by the owner and perhaps his family can bring in a very nice income in the form of salaries, although never as spectacular a profit as is so often the case with costlier courses.

**Architect or Non-Architect Designed:** The modest course can perhaps be laid

The relationship that probably exists between gross annual income from fees, and outlay for maintenance, including promotion, is depicted graphically above. Income generally increases with higher maintenance and promotion standards until the economic law of diminishing returns eventually manifests itself. Gross income from food and drink isn't included in this chart. It frequently runs as high as 50 per cent of fees at an 18-hole course where average or higher maintenance standards are met.

out by the owner, but he should seek advice from a golf course supt. and a professional golfer. The more elaborate setup with its greater construction expenditures should be architect-designed.

This writer recognizes that nearly every golfer would like to design a course. Sometimes the opportunity presents itself. Unfortunately it is sad but true that most elaborate courses designed without professional services are never outstanding successes. Although the amateur designer may use the utmost common sense in making the plan, his lack of experience inevitably leads to natural errors that contribute not only to a prodigious waste of money but to an inferior course.

There is no substitute for training in golf architecture and subsequent experience. Too much is involved initially and over the life span of the course to trust the project to an untrained and inexperienced man. But this does not mean that the owner's ideas should not be embodied in the layout. Certainly the architect must be prepared to consult on all phases of

(Continued on page 95)

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# Southern Cal Pros Skip Tourney In Hassle Over Shop Leases

*Say standards will deteriorate if outside operators move in;  
Owner cites right to run his own concessions*

**BY HOWARD HAGEN**

*San Diego (Calif.) Union Golf Writer*

**S**an Diego County has become a battleground over the question:

To lease or not to lease pro shops to qualified professionals.

The matter came to a head before the San Diego County Open tournament held recently at Cottonwood CC, a new public fee course 18 miles east of downtown San Diego.

The tournament is sponsored annually by the County Golf Association, a group headed by amateurs and including nearly all of the county's 30 clubs in its membership.

## **Disciplinary Action Threatened**

A few weeks before the tournament, directors of the Southern California section of the PGA, headed by Dick Boggs of Sepulveda CC, Los Angeles, announced that section pros who competed in the tournament would be subject to disciplinary action by the section.

The reason: Cottonwood CC does not lease its pro shop but hires two professionals on a salary basis.

Also entering the dispute was the San Diego County Golf Professional Association, of which Don Collett, Coronado, is president.

This group has about 60 members, half of them section, or Class A, pros.

Before the Cottonwood tournament, Boggs informed County GPA officials that non-section pros, mostly assistants who are working for Class A membership, could compete in the San Diego Open without future retribution from the section.

## **Two Others Operate Shops**

Twenty pros, including several who work for Class A Section members, competed at Cottonwood. (An amateur, Marine Lance Corporal Don Harman, won the Open. He also holds the San Diego Amateur and City crowns).

Besides Cottonwood, semi-private Singing Hills CC and private Rancho Santa

Fe are San Diego County courses which run their own pro shops rather than lease them to professionals.

The question has sharpened in recent years with construction of more public and semi-public courses.

Many PGA officials believe that qualified pros (preferably Class A with five years of active pro experience, and a National PGA card) should be allowed to lease pro shops.

They contend the presence of a qualified professional brings business and goodwill to the course and the pro should be rewarded, by allowing him a lease, for the many extra duties he fulfills at the club.

## **Would Weaken Standards**

Veteran PGA members also see management control of their pro shops as a trend that will weaken the ethics and standards of the profession. They claim that eventually pro shops would be operated by clothing and equipment salesmen without professional qualifications that the game requires.

On the other side of the question, Bud Sears, president of Cottonwood said:

## **Has Right To Run Business**

"We believe that a person or group who invest up to \$1,000,000 in a golf plant have the right to run their business as they see fit.

"We have qualified professionals at Cottonwood. One of our pros is in the process of applying for a Class A card from the PGA, and the other one hopes to apply soon. We have a successful operation and pay good salaries.

"A pro shop is a revenue-making part of the business, same as course fees, carts, and the restaurant. It isn't economically feasible or morally justified that management, which has provided the funds, worry, work and brains in constructing a golf course, should give up one of its major assets.

"There are certain courses where it may

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be desirable to lease out the shops — an example, a city-owned course where the city does not want to be bothered with the business aspects. Also, at a private course where the members pay their fees to enjoy golf and get away from business worries.

“Further, 95 per cent of the personal contact with our customers is in our pro shop. Because public relations play such an important part in any commercial enterprise, we feel it should not be entrusted to a concessionaire.”

A PGA of America official told this writer recently that his office has no hard rule about members being pro shop leaseholders, “but we encourage them to let the sectional or national offices look over their contracts” as a protective measure.

The argument is likely to continue.

For years, Los Angeles section pros have not competed in pro-amateur or other tournaments where pros do not hold the pro shop lease.

A big pro-am held at Singing Hills also is reportedly threatened by the section crackdown.

### **It's Complicated—But Alternates Are Assured for World Series**

Sponsors of the World Series of Golf, to be played at Firestone CC in Akron, O., Sept. 7-8, have worked out an alternate system to assure having a full complement of four contenders for the title that Jack Nicklaus won last year in the initial playing of the event.

Nicklaus, as defending champion was to be the first alternate, but since he won this year's Masters, he is seeded into the Series. The second alternate will be the loser of a playoff in any of the major qualifying tournaments which include, in addition to the Masters, the U.S. and British Opens and the PGA Championship.

If only one player is needed to fill out the Series lineup, and if there are more than two losers from the remaining qualifying tournaments, these players will meet at Firestone on Sept. 3 to decide the fourth contender in the Series.

If none of the major qualifying events are decided in playoffs, and additional players are needed to round out the four Series finalists, there will be a playoff on Sept. 3 involving the second-place finishers in the qualifying tournaments.

If it is necessary to hold a Sept. 3 round at Firestone, it will be at 18 holes with a sudden death playoff deciding the final



This is the fourth hole at Cottonwood CC in San Diego, Calif. Class A PGA pros didn't play in County Open tournament at this course recently because of dispute over shop leasing situation.

issue in case of a tie.

To keep peace among the tournament pros, the World Series sponsors are donating \$20,000 to the Utah Open purse because two of the playing dates in this event conflict with the Series. The telecast of the Series in the Salt Lake City area will be delayed until evening so that local fans can attend the Utah Open in the afternoon and still catch the Series.

### **Whitemarsh Open in October**

With June's five PGA tournaments offering prizes totaling \$400,000 and the announcement of the \$200,000 Carling World Open in 1964, another rich tournament that will be played in October generally has been overlooked. That is the \$125,000 Whitemarsh Open that will be held Oct. 3-6 at Whitemarsh Valley CC, near Philadelphia. This event offers the largest purse in PGA history and is being played for the benefit of the Child Development Center for the Handicapped.

### **Bantam Golf Tournament**

First Thunderbird bantam golf invitation will be played July 16-17 at Thunderbird Hills GC, Huron, O. Co-sponsors are the Huron C of C and North Central Ohio District GA. Don Baker, Box 297, Willard, O., is the tournament director. Boys and girls in 10-12 and 13-15 age groups will compete in separate flights.

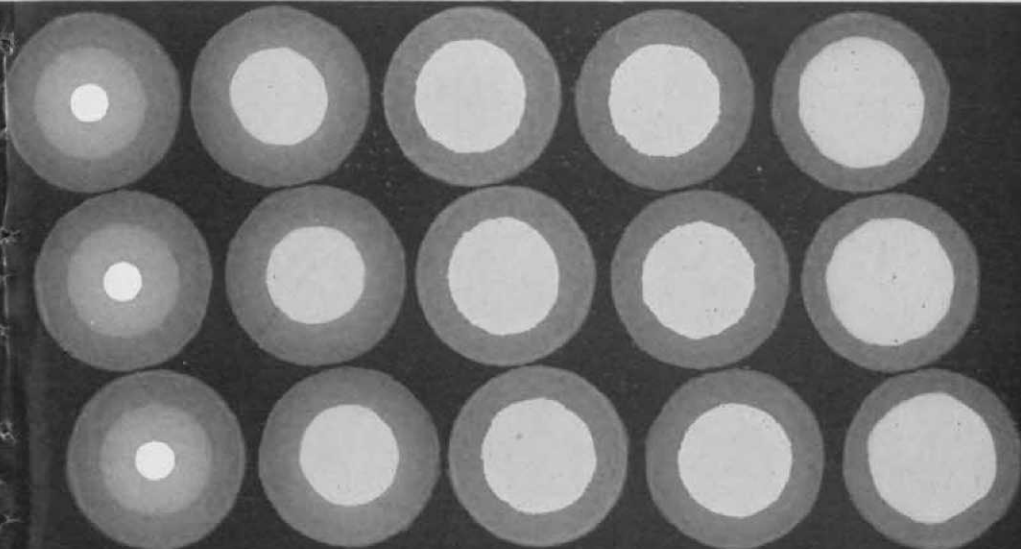


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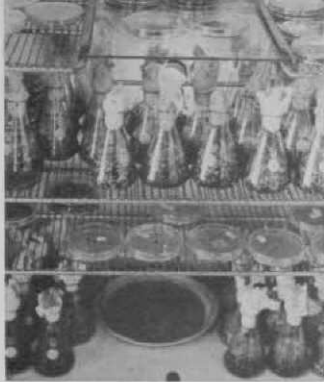
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## Warren's Business Is Turf Production But Pastime Is Research



The production of turfgrass, mainly Merion blue and a half dozen bent varieties, for resale, is the principal business of Warren's Turf Nursery, but outside of agricultural and agronomy stations set up for such purposes, possibly no wider range of experimental and observation work on grasses is being carried on anywhere in the country than at this large Palos Park, Ill., turf farm.

It's undoubtedly because Ben Warren, who invested in 10 acres of ground 25 years ago and founded the nursery, believes that people who make their livings from the soil should put something back into it. His repayment, he decided some time ago, would come through test plots, shadehouse, greenhouse and laboratory in which many strains of grass and their diseases can be observed under as many different conditions, both good and adverse, as can be contrived.

Golf courses, as well as home owners in the northern states from Denver to Detroit, and more recently in the New York-Pennsylvania area, have benefited from the efforts of Warren's company to produce or develop improved turf, and study how diseases make their inroads.

A one time University of Chicago student who ma-

jored in botany and chemistry, Ben Warren confesses to what can be compared to a small boy's fondness for tinkering with motors. Only, in his case, weeds, grass clippings and disease molds take the place of armatures and brushes. He has been tinkering with turf for the last 35 years on a fairly intensive basis, only the trouble is, as Ben points out, that since his main occupation is producing grasses on a commercial scale, he can't devote as much time to his pastime as he'd like.

Actually, the experimental work at Warren's Palos Park acres is directed by Dr. Timothy Gaskin, a plant pathologist who earned his undergraduate degrees at the University of Delaware and the University

of California and then went to Purdue to study for his doctorate. Ben's brother, Bob, oversees the company's sales and advertising activities.

The Warren Nursery is not confined to the 600 acres that make up the Palos Park plots. Over the years, 700 acres near Crystal Lake, Ill., 200 acres at Anderson, Ind., 400 acres near Milwaukee, Wis., and 800 acres in the New York City area have been added. The company has a franchise arrangement with a grower in



Tim Gaskin Ben Warren  
... something in the pot.



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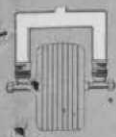
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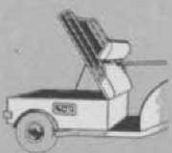
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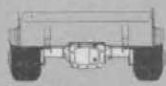
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Ben and Bob Warren check various grass species that are getting a shadehouse test. Below, the look over their fields of Merion.



A group of Midwest supts. show great interest in Merion turf that is being developed for backyard putting greens.

Denver, So, altogether there are about 3,000 acres on which Warren's bluegrass, zoysia and bent sod and stolons are produced. With its roots in the loam all the way from Denver to New York, the nursery's sales are primarily to golf courses and landscape contractors between the Rockies and the Atlantic coast.

The Palos Park nursery is typical of those operated by the Warren firm. It deals mainly in Merion, but of its 600 acres, about 50 are in zoysia, 20 in bents, 5 in fescue and another small portion in a rough mixture for highway use. The nursery, as all other Warren outlets, sells primarily sod and bent stolons.

### 100,000 Plus Feet of Pipe

To keep this acreage properly irrigated, it takes 80,000 feet of 2 inch pipe and another 25,000 feet in a part of the system where the pipe is reduced from 7 to 4 inches. Water is taken from creeks and wells through portable laterals made of aluminum. Pumping capacity at Palos Park is 2,600 gpm.

Both Ben Warren and Tim Gaskin take great pride in describing the physical facts and features of the company's large turf installations, and, of course, they aren't unmindful of the commercial aspects. But a fire is really set under both of them when the subject of research and experiment is suggested.

It takes very little urging for either Warren or Gaskin to take a visitor on what amounts to the \$5.75 tour of the Palos Park plots. Over in the bent section, he'll see small squares of C-19 and Arlington that may be being tested for snowmold, and adjacent to these there may be a small green made up of patchwork bents that have been grown from seed. The experiment here may be to determine how a heterogenous group such as this resists disease. It is sprayed sparingly and the hope is to perhaps induce dollar-spot in order to see how the mixture reacts to it.

### Disease Resistance Studied

In the next plot there may be a section grown from imported seeds or stolons. This, too, is being observed for its resistance to disease. Then, either Warren or Gaskin may explain that the nursery's Evansville bent, a new variety located in another plot, is being grown under certification procedures established by the Illi-

*(Continued on page 97)*