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Associate Member Plan Helps Club Over Financial Bunker

Lifesaving \$40,000 produced by giving limited privileges to outsiders on an annual and daily fee basis

By ALAN ARTACH

Professional, Meadow Hills CC, Denver

Like many clubs, Meadow Hills early in 1963 reached the point where it was hard pressed for operating funds. Assessments had already come near reaching the saturation mark. It was agreed that it was out of the question to tax the 140 members with an assessment on an assessment to keep the course going even though they as well as the club management realized that something drastic had to be done.

Then Bernard Schaffner, the club president, and Ian McPhee, the club manager, got together and decided the club either had to face the facts of life or face what would amount to eviction. The first thing they had to figure out was how much money was needed to run every operation of the club on an annual basis. Then, they set up a budget for each department that was to be adhered to right down to the last, critical dollar.

Getting operating figures assembled and working up the resolve to abide by

a budget isn't easy. But by comparison with finding the money that will keep an operation solvent, these preliminary tasks are routine. The brain wracking comes when a search for adequate revenue is undertaken.

Gives Limited Privileges

After talking to other club officials, bankers and assorted financial experts, Schaffner and McPhee came to the conclusion that the only thing to do at Meadow Hills was resort to an associate membership plan. This, as you know, gives limited privileges to non-members in return for payment of an annual fee plus the payment of a fee every time a club facility, such as the course, is used. It has bailed out many a club in the past and, of course, is going to save many more in the future.

Regular members usually become greatly disgruntled when they first hear that their club is going to resort to the associate member plan, but when they find that it will save not only assessments but possibly the club itself, they become mollified. We went through all this at

Meadow Hills when the plan was adopted.

This is the second year that our associate member plan has been in force. In 1963 it produced a lifesaving \$40,000 in extra revenue for the club, and this year it may produce even a little more because the associate rates have been increased. However, green fees have been reduced for 1964 for the associate players.

How Plan Works

Here are the main features of the plan as it was carried out in 1963:

An associate membership card cost \$18 — tax included;

Green fees were \$2.50 on weekdays and \$4 on weekends and holidays;

Associate members could invite three guests to play with them at the cost of regular green fees plus \$1.50 per guest charge;

Dining room and bar facilities were available to associate members, their families and guests;

Associate members were permitted to reserve tee times, starting on Wednesdays. Private members were extended permanent tee times on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays;

Pool and lockerroom privileges were not extended to associate members.

The program met with great public approval. With little or no publicity describing the plan, 500 associate membership cards were immediately sold. Within a month or so we had filled our quota of 900. Private members at Meadow Hills at first feared that with the influx of new players the course would be overrun during prime playing time.

Eight-Minute Intervals

But we found that by going to eight-minute tee times and by exercising close pro shop supervision on the starting tees, congestion was almost completely avoided. Occasionally, there were complaints from both the private and associate members that they were playing under some pressure, but these never became a source of great trouble. Actually, most of our golfers learned to play at a little faster tempo and found that it not only improved their games but that they enjoyed it.

For 1964, associate member cards were



Here is a Par 3 course that was recently constructed at the Southampton (Bermuda) Golf and Beach Club. Seven of the 18 holes are shown in the photo. Course was designed by Alfred H. Tull, Larchmont, N. Y. architect.

increased from \$18 to \$24. At the same time weekday green fees were reduced to \$1.75 and weekend and holiday fees to \$3.50. Associate members are still permitted to bring three guests each time they play, but the individual guest charge has been increased from \$1.50 to \$3. The reason for the increase is that it was found that guest privileges were abused somewhat in 1963 to avoid the purchase of associate membership cards.

Heavy Weekend Patronage

We kept close records on rounds played in 1963 and found that approximately 25 per cent of our associate members came out on weekends or holidays. But only about one out of ten took advantage of their cards to play through the week. So, for five days at least, our regular or private members had the course pretty much to themselves.

Dining room and bar facilities are still available to associates on the same basis as in 1963. In the last few months we have provided a card room for them to use as a kind of private lounge. Because of the probability of overcrowding, however, we still can't extend pool and lockerroom privileges to the associates.

The associate members have formed their own association within the club and have set up a handicap system. This enables them to have team matches and play tournaments and also has broadened their spending in the clubhouse because they hold quite a few parties, buffets, etc. in conjunction with their competitions.

(Continued on page 86)

I'll never forget...

The "shock treatment" that cooled off the hot-tempered golfer

by Superintendent George Kirkpatrick, Eisenhower Golf Course, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.



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Seed didn't germinate in box on right in soil mix of 6 parts sand, 1 part soil and 1 part peat. There's dense grass in left box from same seed in mix that had 2 parts of the same soil and 1 part peat. (Right. Divots on Bermuda tee were filled with soil containing poa trivialis seed. (10 pounds of poa trivialis have as many seeds as 96 pounds of domestic rye.)

Divot Repair

Poa Trivialis and fine leaf fescue mixture are recommended for a quick and presentable cover

BY O. J. NOER

The necessity for replacing divots on tees and on fairways has been always stressed. Caddies have been trained and instructed to undertake this task in the past. Since the advent of the pull cart and the golf car, divot replacement has been neglected.

Divot replacement is of doubtful value during dry, hot, windy weather. The grass in the replaced divot withers and then dies. Replacement may be helpful in the spring and fall when the weather is favorable for the pieces of turf to develop roots and re-unite with the soil below. Even then most of the recovery may come from natural causes.

Good grasses spread of their own accord, sometimes by underground rhizomes or by surface runners, depending upon the kinds of grass in the turf. In this way small areas are covered rather quickly provided water and fertilizer are plenti-



Spot just ahead of stake was a deep divot. It was filled with soil containing Pennlawn fescue and poa trivialis seed seven to ten days before photo was taken.



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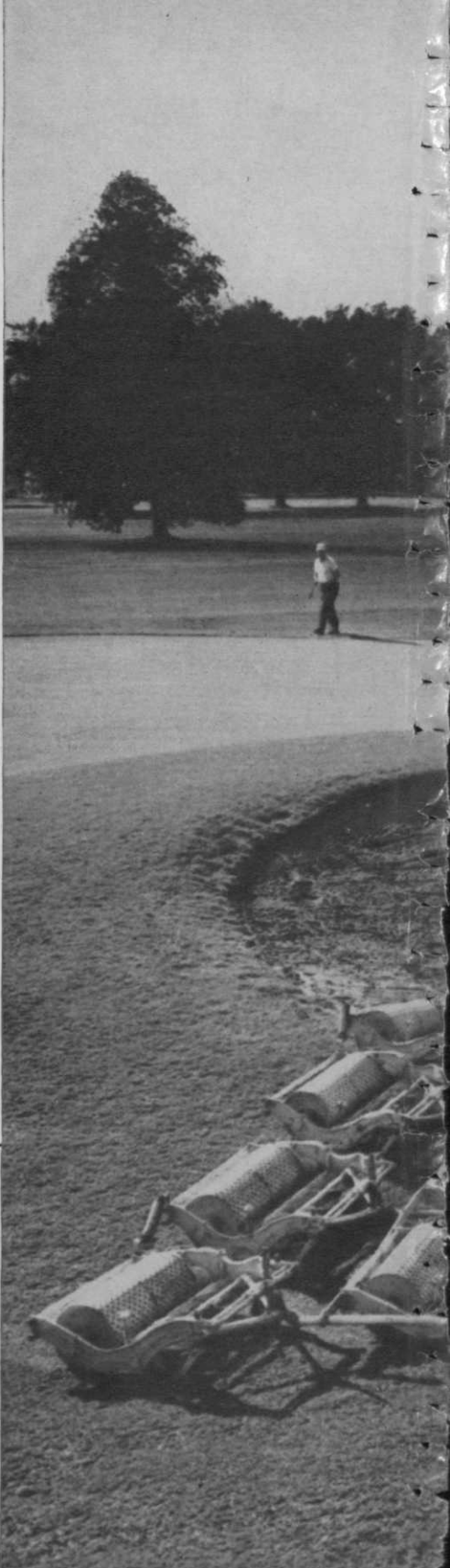
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ful. A temporary cover is the only thing needed while nature is doing its work.

Waste of Time

Where tees and fairways are watered and fertilized divot replacement may be a waste of time. Many clubs have found that out. They help nature provide grass by filling the divots with soil containing grass seed. This is done once weekly, usually on Monday.

The type of soil and the kind of grass seed are the secret of quick cover.

The soil must contain enough organic matter, usually peat, to provide ample water holding capacity. There must be a continuous supply of moisture to insure germination of seed and growth of the young seedling grass. One-third of peat by volume is not too much.

Poor Soil Mixture

Too little organic matter may be a reason for the difficulty in obtaining a stand of grass from seed on some of the new soil mixtures, such as 85 per cent sand, 7½ per cent clay and 7½ per cent peat, by volume. On this kind of soil it is next to impossible to keep the immediate surface continuously moist while the grass seed is germinating, and young seedlings commence growth.

On a dry windy day, seedling grass may wither and die in half an hour, or less. This is caused by a rapid loss of surface moisture due to the wind. The soil below may be moist. That does not help young grass because roots have not yet penetrated the subsoil.

Rye Becomes Unightly

Until recently, domestic rye grass was the seed mostly used. In the north a little bent grass seed has been added. Rye grass germinates quickly and grows so fast that every divot is unightly because the grass becomes longer than the surrounding turf.

There is a better combination for use in the north and in the south. *Poa Trivialis* and fine leaf fescue (preferably Pennlawn fescue) germinate almost as quickly as rye grass. They grow at a slower rate so divots are much more presentable. Supts usually use twice as much fescue as *poa trivialis* because of the difference in the size of the seed.

On Bermuda grass fairways in the far south this combination, or *poa trivialis*

Illinois Supt. Says Etiquette Should Be Taught Via TV

In a recent letter to Warren Cantrell, PGA president, John C. Ebel, supt. at the Biltmore CC in Barrington, Ill., suggested that with so many new golfers coming into the field, a minute or two of occasional TV golf show time should be devoted to educating them. In fact, said Ebel, it wouldn't be a bad idea if such big events as the Masters, Open, PGA Championship, etc. were interrupted, if only for 60 seconds, to demonstrate a point in golf etiquette.

Ebel further suggested that if fellows like Arnie Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player were to ask TV watchers to replace their divots, not scuff up the greens and rake traps after playing out of them, the response would be amazing. "Arnie's Army" alone would replace acres of sod during a tournament if Palmer were to ask them to do so, Ebel added.

The Illinois supt. feels that his suggestion is especially timely because so many youngsters are taking up golf. "Most of them," he says, "would be willing to cooperate in conserving our courses, but nobody is setting much of an example for them."

alone, gives excellent results for use during the winter season. This holds for Bermuda grass fairways in the belt from Washington to Kansas City whenever divot repair is desirable. In the north, on watered fairways of cool season grasses, it is wise to include a small amount of seaside bent, especially where bentgrass is in the turf.

Recommends Equal Parts

A good soil mix is equal parts of sand, soil and peat. Some mix seed with the soil beforehand, others have the workmen add seed as needed. The men walk down the tee, or fairway, carrying a pail of soil. They drop enough soil to fill the divot and firms it in place with his foot. As a rule seedlings are visible for week-end play when divots are filled on Monday.