

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR GOLF IN WAR-TIME?

Without admitting one iota of defeatism let's don't kid ourselves about the tough job that golf—and other sports have. The job is that of justifying their continuance by a well-planned campaign of performance for the definite good of the nation at war. This urgent task must be aggressively, wisely, and persistently handled.

Here are candid opinions from representative operating officials, who are the men closest to the situation; also additional comment by manufacturers. Leading off in this news 'roundup' is Walter E. Langton, supt., San Gabriel (Calif.) CC, who views in a starkly realistic way the job cut out for golf.

Langton's analysis may scare the hell out of the easy wilters. It is a challenge to those whose brains and energy are adequate to meet a crisis.

IT IS difficult to forecast with accuracy what will happen to the game of golf or what will happen to private and public golf courses before the war ends. If we look back to the last war for any guidance, we find very little similarity either in manner or geographical position. During the last war we had an expeditionary force in France. It was true the fleet was engaged on the high seas, but we were not mechanically strong in France. We fooled around with the Liberty motor for a long time and never did get into mass production. Very few American-built planes were used in France.

But now we see soldiers encamped near home; soldiers marching in full war regalia on our streets. We have authorized military black-outs. We are told what to do and what not to do, and what is perhaps more serious, the enemy has been at our very gates—only 4 miles from Cypress Point where nestles one of our most beautiful golf courses and where an American ship has been attacked by an enemy under-sea craft. We hear of enemy planes flying over head, and many American lives lost on American soil, so this war is different. It is right at home.

Job Cut Out For Us

Our President has told the world that this country is to become the arsenal of democracy, that we have a tough job on our hands, that we are fighting a combination of great military and naval powers which in over 10 years have built up the greatest fighting machine since the dawn of time. Then we are told by the President that in order to meet this diabolical threat to our existence we must sacrifice and

pitch in and help all we possibly can; and in order to do this job, all the vast resources, technical ability, business administration and labor must be harnessed in one great team for the successful prosecution of the war.

This is not a war for a particular ideal, but a war of tooth and claw (jungle law). We are fighting for the right of self-preservation. It is a highly technical war of trucks, tanks, airplanes, rubber chemicals, fertilizer, ships, transportation, radio, food. The government should and will have first claim on all goods and raw materials for the duration of the war.

Saw War in Canada

During the last war I was in Canada and I know what the military authorities there thought of golf courses. They thought they were admirable places on which to train and drill soldiers, and when one bright morning I saw a cavalry regiment of some 500 horses cavorting with some 2,000 infantry up and down my fairways and across my greens and using golf traps for military hazards, I wasn't very enthusiastic about whether golf lived or died.

But all wars cease some time or other and that is what we have to think about; the end of the war and how we can best preserve our present golf status for the future.

You pose the question, Mr. Editor, of the great physical and mental responsibility of golf clubs today . . . I hardly know what to say to that inquiry. The great preponderance of people in this country do not play golf and they would show little sympathy for the death of anybody's pet golf club. Most of our



Above photo was taken in June, 1915, at the Edmonton, Alta., Municipal Golf Club. The horses seen in the background are on the No. 5 green. According to competent observers, "horses are very good at digging up turf, and infantry have never been taught to replace divots."

young men will be or should be serving with the fighting forces, and so we have left, men over military age and men not physically fit, women golfers, and men whose services to the nation are more important in civilian life.

Golf undoubtedly helps build morale, but there are other kinds of recreation which share this merit with golf. It is difficult to make the public and the authorities believe that golf is a necessity and if public courses fail to pay for themselves, the public golf course players can hardly expect the cities to provide funds to keep them going. Herein lies that inexorable law of the survival of the fittest which governs sport, as well as humans, animals and plants, the right to live.

Those clubs which have maintained a moderate policy of expansion, whose income has always been above expenditure and which have physical advantages in the form of cheap water, low taxes and easy access to population, will certainly survive above those clubs which do not possess such advantages.

But club officials will have to watch the nickels, and greenkeepers will have to justify their existence by earning their living the hard way. There will be many laments from golfers when greens do not get cut so often or a pitched ball fails to halt on a green for want of sufficient irrigation. There will probably be more footprints in sand traps, and there may be a shortage of golf balls.

Courses may dry up for want of rubber hose or the authorities may restrict the use of power for pumping purposes. We may be limited in cutting fairways or

using trucks because of gas rationing. Rubber tires on machinery may be replaced by iron wheels, wheel-barrows may come into use again and the faithful horse again be given his chance to make good. For as we increase our military forces the more equipment they will need—and the less chance for clubs to secure the necessary equipment to run a golf course.

If we have a long war, the future for golf officials, club managers, greenkeepers, and professionals is not a happy one to contemplate, but we went through the last war and came out on top, and there is no reason why we should not do so again.

If I may be presumptuous enough to issue advice, I would say that manufacturers and their agents should begin to ration all clubs, both rich and poor, so that each may have an equal chance to survive. The idea that because a club or a city has a surplus of funds, it has the right to hoard and hog all available material, is neither ethical nor sensible, but a miserable policy of short sightedness. Remember—the war will end sometime, like all wars do, and it is more difficult and more costly to build up new customers than it is to retain the old. The more golf courses manufacturers can keep going by supplying needed equipment, the more solid will be their position when the war ends.

We greenkeepers in 1942 have a hard, grim task before us in keeping the game going and that goes for all personnel connected with golf clubs. We shall be compelled to do things we never did before, and leave things undone that will be painful to us. One of the hardest things we

shall have to do is to make the public and the authorities believe that golf is a physical necessity, that it builds morale, that although we lived without it for two million years, it has now become so much a part of our way of life that we cannot do without it. When men are tearing each other apart all over the world, we must work wisely and diligently to justify the continuance of golf as a factor in the nation's strength.

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ROBERT A. MITCHELL, veteran greenkeeper at Kernwood CC, Salem, Mass., and who has four sons who followed their father in the greenkeeping profession, says about golf maintenance in war-time:

"The difficulties golf course maintenance men may experience under war-time conditions will vary in different localities. We may expect further stringency of labor and purchased goods. Revenue may decrease due to resignations caused by collapse of business affected by priorities on materials.

"If one must operate with less labor hours per season or less efficient labor, then each club must decide what it will go without—such as less flower beds, and cut flowers, and permitting traps to go back to nature-like links land. Scythe mowing can be left undone where out of line of play. Improvements along construction lines will have to stop. Roughs can, in many cases, be reel-mowed often, to save raking and hauling hay. Some hand mowing may be turned into power mowing. Weeding of all but greens could be omitted, this, of course, varying on different courses.

Counsels Being More "Open-minded"

"If conditions are difficult let us try being more open minded—take the door off for the duration and remove "cannot" from our vocabulary. Let's give ourselves the once-over—take a step away and look things over. To illustrate: a greenkeeper showed a visitor a green, half of which was cleaned of crab grass, pointing out that half of the green was cleaned but that it was impossible to clean the other half. The visiting greenkeeper pondered in his mind, "Now this man cannot weed this green because he thinks he cannot, but I would not think it difficult because I have done similar weeding. I think when I go home I had better look things over and see what impossible job I have that will become possible to do if I try." Maintenance men will have a chance to be skill-

ful in teaching inexperienced help the most efficient ways of doing work and how to make best use of the strength and energy of those not fully developed or those who no longer have the full vigor of youth.

"Necessity is the mother of invention. Mother Necessity will doubtless bring forth a large brood in the near future when no new machines and materials are obtainable and old stocks wear out. It was told of old 'clipper ship days' that a 'good jury mast (Jurym'st) band' was one who, when a disaster happened, such as having a mast carried away, could rig up a temporary mast out of spare spars and wreckage to keep going."

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MARSHALL E. FARNHAM, greenkeeper at Philadelphia CC, West Conshohocken, Pa., says:

"It seems to me to be too early to venture any opinion as to what adjustments of maintenance practices may suffice under the current war-time developments. I suspect that even routine cutting and watering operations may have to be materially curtailed with other practices perhaps entirely eliminated.

"This attitude may be too severe for the general welfare, but even under such curtailments courses in reasonable condition at present should continue to provide satisfactory recreational conditions for some time without any question as to cooperation with the necessary war-time economies."

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EDWARD B. DEARIE, Jr., well-known greens authority in the Chicago district, gives the following opinion on how courses must adjust operations to war-time conditions:

I recall very distinctly that with the period of the first world war, there began a new era in golf course equipment

Tom Hudgins, proprietor of a driving range in Richmond, Va., bet he could drive 4,000 golf balls in a day—and did it, winning \$165 for the feat. He 'went to work' at 8:20 a.m., and finished up at 11:50 p.m. that night. His drives averaged around 200 yards; each shot was teed up by a caddie. Tom is shown during a practice session the day preceding the non-stop attempt, in the photo above.



improvement, evidenced by the fact that at that time I was using horse-drawn fairway mowers at the club employing me.

Up to the year 1928 golf had a phenomenal growth, and then followed the worst period of depression known to golf clubs in this country. Golf course maintenance faces a new crisis today. We must be prepared as never before to adjust ourselves to a deficiency in our maintenance program. The lack of manual labor must be met with fully motorized course equipment over tees, fairways and greens.

The use of all-out power mowers on golf courses will reduce labor hours one-half. In short the following equipment will be a necessity:

- (1) For greens—duplex mowers.

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Norwood and Beckett Tell of Pro Prospects In '42

JOE NORWOOD, Los Angeles (Calif.) CC pro, has the following to say about what he thinks the pro's program for 1942 will, and should be:

"My club, in the East, during 1917-18 was active on a basis that if the golfer ordinarily played three or four days a week he would reduce his play to once or twice weekly. Club activity was reduced to a minimum with relation to parties, dances, etc. With reference to present day war activities, aviation, for golf courses along Eastern and Western coasts, puts a little different slant on things—for should there be any invasion by planes, golf courses would make good landing fields, so building of barriers on the courses might be in the minds of the War Department.

Count More on Older Pros

"The new age limit of 20 to 44 for active military service, will take in a high percent of the pros and therefore the older pros will be counted on more than ever.

"My program for furthering continuation of golf is along these lines: should golf playing time be sharply restricted, let's remember that a practice range will enable one to give, say, one hour to practicing with special exercises in addition, as compared to three and four hours for a round of golf. This will keep the golfing public fit and bring about a chance they have longed for in peace times—taking time out for practice and lessons.

"Group lessons can be arranged for hours best suited to those interested, for time will be considered on a basis different than that of peace time.

- (2) For fairways—seven and nine gang mowers.

- (3) For rough—mowers with increased bar lengths and increased cutting units.

- (4) For tees—all power mowers with wider cut.

We also have improved topdressing machinery and power sprayers and one man water systems in operation today. We are ready for what may come and I think some interesting cost figures will result in the years ahead on golf course maintenance. Trial and error are our greatest teachers and when this war is over, I believe golf course maintenance will have met its greatest test and not been found wanting.

"The caddie situation will probably cause more and more use of carts, or fewer clubs, which after all, hurts the manufacturer, but golf must go on. There'll be fewer balls, naturally.

"Professional tournaments started after the last war, so even one familiar with the earlier days can hardly foresee the effect on present tourneys. The Professional Golfers Association was but two years old when the war ended. Golf pros will have no easy time. Many private clubs will have to exist on a public pay-as-you-play basis.

"Golf supplies will be somewhat slack. Pros, with clubs which are hard-pressed, may be asked to turn in some of their earnings. This will give the pro a chance to keep the club open—where dues are hardly sufficient to keep expenses up.

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Howard Beckett, pro at Capital City Club, Atlanta, Ga., views pro and golf club prospects during war-time with cold, calm realism. Howard says:

"In 1918 the battlefront was in France. Most of the boys when they had the chance at the many different camps at home, played golf, and in fact, many had their clubs with them. At my club, which was close to famous Camp Gordon, we had lots of the boys playing over the week-ends and we had a great time.

"But this is not the set-up under present conditions. These youngsters are taking this thing seriously. They have no time for golf. In fact the young fellows at my club have given it up entirely until they find out what this is all about.