

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

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CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2024

#1 The Adventure Begins

Some of you have heard me talking for years about this mythical beast called CloudClubhouse... a software app that could cure the ills (or amplify the success) of the golf industry.

We were always in the planning phase... with the launch just around the corner. Well, the wait is over... mark October 21, 2024 on your calendar as the day when we FINALLY pulled the trigger.

We are on a mission to fulfill the potential of this CloudClubhouse vision.

Which begs the question... actually a number of questions...

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

Stay tuned for answers to those questions and many more.

If you are a golf course operator or avid golfer or anyone else who has a passion for the greatest game ever invented, please join us for this ride.

CloudClubhouse Daily will feed you 30-60 seconds of wisdom or nonsense or something in between... we promise it will always be thought-provoking.

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2024

#2 WHO is on the CloudClubhouse team?

Every storyline needs to answer the questions Who, What, When, Where, Why and How... CloudClubhouse is no different. Let's get started.

The WHO behind CloudClubhouse starts with a group of intellectually curious golf course operators who believe we have a golden opportunity to extend the recent renaissance of the golf business.

Operators like this Minnesota triumvirate...

Tom Abts of Deer Run, the philosopher-king of the golf industry...

Joel Burger at StoneRidge, a serial golf entrepreneur...

Kent Blaschko of Royal Golf Club, whose string of successful results extends from Hilton Head to the Upper Midwest.

This is a team you want to collaborate with if you are a golf course operator looking to stretch your imagination and keep innovating.

Apparation will play the role of systems integrator... providing the connective tissue technology that helps golfers play more often and golf course operators be more successful.

We're on a mission to build this team out to 250+ early adopter golf course operators by the end of 1Q 2025. If this sounds like fun, join us and reap the benefits of being in on the ground floor... like a 60% discount on your annual course operator CloudClubhouse subscription.

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2024

#3 WHAT is CloudClubhouse?

The simple answer is... CloudClubhouse is an app... but a highly unusual one.

People increasingly use smartphone apps to manage almost every aspect of their lives... schedules, newsfeeds, fitness programs, etc. You name it... there's an app for that.

The current market for smartphone golfer apps poses The Golfer's App Dilemma... with two unsatisfying options:

#1 Use a branded golf course app; but then the golfer needs a separate app for every course... very inconvenient... and these apps are expensive for the golf course operator

OR

#2 Use a 3rd party app that the golfer can use anywhere... but these are expensive for the golfer and golf course operators aren't able to control the content and customer relationships.

CloudClubhouse offers an alternative... an app that a golfer can use anywhere for free but where the golf course operators control the content and marketing channel. It costs course operators less than branded apps and is 100% compatible with golf course management software solutions.

There's much more... keep reading for a daily stream of examples of how CloudClubhouse solves The Golfer's App Dilemma and creates value.

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2024

#4 WHEN can you get your hands on CloudClubhouse?

When can you get your hot little hands on CloudClubhouse?

The short answer is NOW!

You may have heard the legendary wisdom about releasing software from Reed Hastings, the founder of LinkedIn... “If you’re not embarrassed by the first version of your product, you’ve launched too late.”

The current version of CloudClubhouse has an amazing set of unique features. It also has some rough edges that need to be sanded off and is missing features that we know we will need to add... We hope you will tolerate those temporary issues as you take advantage of the super-duper features that are already available.

Any golfer can use CloudClubhouse NOW as a web app by downloading from the Apple iOS store OR by simply navigating to <https://cc.cloudclubhouse.com> on any browser-based device.

We also plan to have CloudClubhouse in the Google Play Store in 1Q 2025.

Any golf course operator that wants to use CloudClubhouse as a powerful marketing and customer relationship enhancer can become an Early Adopter now... follow the instructions at <https://www.cloudclubhouse.com>. Early Adopters will pay 60% less than the retail rate for annual CloudClubhouse subscriptions.

What are you waiting for?!?!?!?!?

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2024

#5 WHERE can you use CloudClubhouse?

CloudClubhouse is a cloud-based app designed for use on smartphones, so you can use it from anywhere.

It's got a golf course directory that contains every golf course on the planet so golfers can organize a tee time or fire up a scorecard literally anywhere on planet earth where they can find an open tee box.

My personal favorite feature is "Compare Played List" that lets me compare the list of courses I've played in my golf career with those played by any of my playing partners... talk about a conversation starter!

Golf course operators who subscribe to CloudClubhouse can log in to a password-secured dashboard from anywhere and track player activity, update customized promotional messages and much more.

CloudClubhouse is an open platform designed to integrate with all manner of other golf-related capabilities... tee time booking systems, GPS info, the USGA handicap systems and other scoring aggregators... some of that stuff is still in development, but it's all on the roadmap that makes CloudClubhouse golf's most versatile app.

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2024

#6 WHY did Apparation develop CloudClubhouse?

There are hundreds of apps for golfers. What makes CloudClubhouse different?

You've heard the old saying ... "people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care".

The Apparation team believes golf is the greatest game in the world and we want the golf industry to be as healthy as possible.

Apparation cares about helping golfers play more golf... that's why we built an app that makes it so convenient for golfers to organize their next game.

Apparation cares about helping golf course owners and operators make more profit so they'll continue to use their valuable property for golf instead of other uses... that's why we built an app that enables course operators to generate several new revenue streams.

Apparation doesn't have an ego... that's why we built an app that puts the golf course brands in the spotlight.

Now... we are a for profit company... but we don't have unrealistic expectations about how much we can make and as a privately held company we don't have undue pressure to grow too large or charge too much... that's why we made CloudClubhouse so affordable for course operators and free for golfers.

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2024

#7 HOW does CloudClubhouse create value?

CloudClubhouse enables golf course operators to offer a branded app experience to golfers without having to bear the full costs of their own app... this reduces costs relative to traditional course-branded apps.

CloudClubhouse leverages the relationships that golfers already have with golf course operators, so Apparation doesn't have to spend millions on consumer marketing... this reduces costs relative to 3rd party apps.

CloudClubhouse enables golf course operators to deliver marketing messages to golfers through a common marketing channel... this reduces costs and increases revenues as golfers react to the opportunities presented to play (and pay) more often.

Apparation leverages the decades of experience its team has in software design and development to build its products as efficiently as possible... this reduces costs.

Apparation earns a fair profit on its efforts but shares most of the savings with course operators and golfers... and does not demand any barter rounds or revenue share on course operator services.

Add it all up and you get high value functionality at low cost... a winning combination.

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MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2024

#8 Please don't make me download another app!

In a recent article in The Atlantic, author Ian Bogost pleads ... “Please don't make me download another app”. Ian currently has 139 apps on his phone and is bombarded with requests/requirements to add more by every business he is transacting with. Sound familiar?

He goes on to say “It's enough to drive you crazy, which is a process you can also track with apps for mental health, such as Headspace and Calm.”

I agree with him. Things have gotten out of hand. Golf apps that only let me manage games at a single course are of no interest to me. What... am I supposed to load my list of playing partners into ten different golf apps?

At the same time, I totally understand why a golf course operator would want to be able to control the messaging and content that I see on my golf app and be uninspired by 3rd party apps like The Grint and Golfpass.

CloudClubhouse is designed to solve this Golfer's App Dilemma... a single app for golfers that enables golf course operators to control the content that is presented to the golfer.

It sounds simple, but it's not. Apparation has been working out the kinks for a decade.

Try it here... we're pretty confident you'll like it.

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2024

#9 Why MSP first?

It is not an accident that the first handful of golf course operators that are adopting CloudClubhouse are in the Minneapolis/St. Paul Metro area.

Sure, part of that is because that is Apparation's home turf and we've developed lots of relationships over the years with golf course operators in our home territory.

But there's something more. As part of its annual review of Golf Software Wars data, Apparation analyzes the use of golf course management software in 30 large metropolitan markets. We have consistently found that MSP is by far the "healthiest" market in terms of GCMS use. Whereas most markets are dominated by a single vendor, MSP course operator software is amazingly diverse. No vendor has a dominant market share and foreUP, Lightspeed and Club Prophet all have more customers in MSP than they do in any of the other 30 major markets. Club Caddie and TenFore are beginning to penetrate the market and don't look now but TeeWire is coming up fast in the outside lane. And I haven't even mentioned NBC Sports Next/GolfNow... the overall US market leader.

This diversity is a strength, but it does mean that golfers are left without a single source that they can go to that ties everything together. CloudClubhouse has the potential to be that glue... and in a friendly way that is convenient for golfers and not directly competitive with the GCMS offerings.

This is a dense topic... if you're interested in taking a deeper dive, contact us anytime and we'll go as deep as you want.

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2024

#10 The most efficient way to do something – Part I

I used to work on systems integration projects for very large companies, and we were always seeking to design processes that were more efficient... a few dollars saved times millions of repetitions adds up to real value.

One of my colleagues used to frequently say during design discussions that “the most efficient way to do something is not to do it at all”. It was a reminder that sometimes things that we have “always done” are not necessary.

CloudClubhouse frequently seeks to leverage that aphorism.

For example... let’s say you are trying to get one of your customers to try your CloudClubhouse digital scorecard for the first time as part of your drive to drastically reduce and eventually eliminate the single use paper scorecard.

You can require them to go to the app store, download the app, put in some credentials and log in.

Or... using CloudClubhouse’s web app design, you can allow them to just scan a QR code that ushers them directly into the scorecard app... no download... no entry of PII... just scan and score.

If they like the experience, then they might be ready to download the app and create a password-secured account so they can use CloudClubhouse functionality on every course..

In other words... the most efficient way to download an app is not to download it at all!

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2024

#11 The most efficient way to do something – Part II

When it comes to golf, first and foremost I'm a golfer... and secondarily I'm a golf software designer. So I always start designing golf software products from the perspective of how it will help make golf more fun, convenient and possibly affordable... so I can play (and pay) more often.

Let's say I'm looking to play a round of golf next Monday.

I can find an available tee time, make a guesstimate of how many people will join me, book a tee time, invite some other players, watch the responses so I know whether I have to adjust the number of players, send a few reminders to the laggards who never respond to the first invitation and do about a dozen other things between now and Monday. And... I might not get any takers and need to scrap the plans or play alone. It's exhausting just thinking about it.

CloudClubhouse gives me a lot of assistance to make that process more efficient, but then there's an alternative.

I could use the CloudClubhouse Join a Game feature to find a game that's got an empty slot, join it and show up on Monday... simple as that.

In other words, the most efficient way to book a tee time is not to book it at all... just join a game that's already been booked by someone else.

It sounds magical... and it kinda is... it definitely helps me avoid some of those dreaded woulda/coulda/shoulda played days.

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2024

#12 Sticky is not icky

The word “sticky” often connotes something unpleasant... even icky.

But when it comes to customer relationships, sticky is a trait you should seek to attain.

Imagine that I am a golfer who considers your operation my “home course”. I play most of my golf there. But at least several times a year I play elsewhere... maybe you’re running a charity event on a day when I want to play... or I’m traveling out of town and manage to squeeze in a round or two... or my buddy on the other side of the Metro wants me to join him at his course for the day.

If you are providing golfers with a branded app that they can only use at your course, they are going to completely detach themselves from you during their travels. That’s NOT a sticky customer relationship.

But if you are a CloudClubhouse sponsor, YOUR customer can stay attached to you even when they are playing someone else’s course... when they open their CloudClubhouse app to organize their away games or to post their scores on another course, your brand will be prominently displayed with a “sponsored by” tagline that keeps you front and center in their mind.

Now, instead of being miffed that you were too busy running an event to allow them to play your course, they are thankful to you for providing a tool that helps them play a fun round of golf today.

Sticky customer relationships are not icky... they are solid gold... and CloudClubhouse helps you achieve them.

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2024

#13 Brass Tacks... and \$\$\$

So far in these CloudClubhouse Daily messages, we've been a little vague regarding the economics of CloudClubhouse participation.

Let's get down to brass tacks.

CloudClubhouse is FREE for golfers to use... that removes any financial barriers to use.

Of course, the service can only be offered free to golfers if someone pays to support the costs of developing and operating CloudClubhouse capabilities, and our business model is to have golf course operators pay the lion's share of those costs.

Golf course operators who want to sponsor CloudClubhouse members and inject their promotional messages into the CloudClubhouse app pay an annual subscription of \$2,500... **ALTHOUGH FOR A BRIEF TIME YOU CAN SIGN UP AS AN EARLY ADOPTER AND REDUCE THAT PRICE BY 60%... ONLY \$1,000.**

The benefits that you can achieve include incremental revenue from additional rounds of golf played due to CloudClubhouse's convenience features, expanded marketing reach and stickier customer relationships ... and cost reductions such as reduced scorecard printing costs and reduction in 3rd party marketing services that can be done more cost-effectively via CloudClubhouse.

Apparation can't guarantee benefits because they are dependent on your actions, but if you have any doubts about your ability to achieve a very healthy ROI on your CloudClubhouse subscription, let's talk soon to clarify how this program can work for you.

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3

#14 Do the math

If I told you that a CloudClubhouse subscription had the potential to generate \$100k or more in incremental revenue for your golf course, would you believe me?

Ok, I'll admit it... I'm a little biased. But bear with me here as I do a little arithmetic.

There are 25M+ golfers in the US and approximately 11,00 public golf courses... that means there are 2,272 golfers per public golf course.

Those golfers play an average of about 20 rounds per year... less than once every two weeks. Surely by providing golfers with the fun and convenience associated with CloudClubhouse's tee time planning capabilities, we can help golfers play at least one extra round of golf per year. Some won't play more, but some will play a lot more than one more round.

If those extra rounds of golf generated a modest \$44 per round in incremental revenue, the average course operator would yield incremental revenues of over \$100,000 ($2,272 * \$45 = \$102,240$).

Yes, that's a crude calculation... but it's believable isn't it?

As a golfer, I know for a fact that some additional fun and convenience will help me play at least several more times a year.

Let's go generate those six figure bumps.

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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2024

#15 Woulda/coulda/shoulda/didn't

The worst days of the year for me are the ones where I woulda played a round of golf... coulda played ... shoulda played... but didn't.

I'm not talking about days when it was pouring rain or freezing... I'm talking about days when the weather was good enough to play but inertia got in the way.

You see, I'm the poor schuck who usually organizes the tee times that I play in and It's not easy to arrange to have multiple people show up at the same place at the same time to spend 2-4 hours playing a round of golf.

On the days when I just can't conjure up enough energy to put a foursome together, I often think how nice it would be if a course operator near me made my life easier by offering up some 'mixer' tee times that I could just join without worrying about whether I fill up the whole foursome myself. Those types of tee times would assure me that I'd be playing with people who, like me, enjoy meeting new playing partners and that I'm welcome as a 'single'.

Am I asking too much? CloudClubhouse offers course operators features that enable you to offer mixer tee times without a lot of fuss and muss.

Please help me and millions of other golfers eliminate the woulda/coulda/shoulda played days.

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2024

#16 They're YOUR Customers

The Apparation team that built and supports the CloudClubhouse software is obsessive about providing a great user experience for golfers, but we never forget that the course operators who subscribe to CloudClubhouse own the customer relationships with the golfers.

Golfers who are logged into CloudClubhouse never see the Apparation brand... their sponsoring facility's brand is front and center... and if a golfer happens to be playing your course today, you can control the promotional messages that the golfer sees as they work their way through their scorecard.

Likewise, Apparation does not exploit the golfer emails, phone numbers and other personally identifiable information that users enter in their CloudClubhouse accounts. That data is reserved for use by the course operators who sponsor the members and who operate the courses where the golfers are playing.

It's simple... those golfers are YOUR customers... not Apparation's.

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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2024

#17 Hello, HAL

I've been involved in developing software for almost 50 years. AI has been touted as the next big thing every 10 years or so since the 1980s... and it always disappointed.

But this time it's for real... today's super powerful processors and billions of dollars of sophisticated software are beginning to produce some truly amazing results. This stuff might just find the cure for cancer soon. But there is no shortage of naysayers that say that AI is dangerous... and there's some truth in that... it won't all be seashells and balloons... remember HAL from 2001: A Space Odyssey?

Does any of this have anything at all to do with golf? So far... not much.

Expect to hear more and more fat claims by software providers that their solutions are "AI-based". Take some of that with a grain of salt... a lot of it is just overzealous marketing. We won't insult your intelligence by claiming that all of the new features we are packing into CloudClubhouse are AI.

But we are keeping a close eye on this technology as it evolves, and we'll do our best to give you some common sense info about AI trends as they begin to creep into golf apps. We'll look for opportunities to integrate with some of the capabilities that are being produced by the billions of dollars of investments by Apple, Google, Microsoft and other tech giants.

There will come a point... maybe not too far down the road... when golfers will be able to rely on their AI agent to find and book their next tee time. That'll be convenient golfers and lucrative for golf course operators... win-win.

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2024

#18 Away Games

Based on some recent research that we did using handicap score posting, most golfers play 25% or more of their rounds at courses other than their 'home' course.

What happens today when your regular customers play an "away game"? They are out of sight and out of mind... you have little to no visibility into where they are and who they are playing with. And, for that matter, you are out of sight and out of mind to them as they enjoy their away game... they might even be a little miffed at you because you didn't have an available tee time and/or didn't help them find a place to play.

What will happen when one of the CloudClubhouse members that you sponsor organizes and plays a game at another course using CloudClubhouse tee time planning capabilities? You'll know where, when and with whom they are playing. As they use CloudClubhouse to arrange their tee time or track their scores, they'll be reminded that it was your course that provided them with the CloudClubhouse capabilities that made life more convenient.

You know that most of your customers are going to play a healthy number of away games. Use CloudClubhouse to stay connected and deepen your relationships.

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2024

#19 Don't Throw It All Away

Here's a puzzler for you... what does Bob Dylan have to do with golf apps?

I'll guarantee you that there are some golfers out on your course today who are using a 3rd party app like The Grint or 18 Birdies.

You did a great job attracting those golfers to your course... they chose to play at your place over all the other options they had today.

But then... instead of seizing the opportunity to engage with those golfers for 4 hours via CloudClubhouse... you threw away that opportunity. As Dylan put it... "I must have been mad... I never knew what I had... until I threw it all away."

Not only could you have had a four hour 'conversation' with those golfers, but you could also have been a hero by providing them with a free golf app instead of the one that they are paying good money for.

When the next batch of golfers choose to spend a day on your course, make them an offer they can't refuse... a free golf app that they can use to track their score and that'll save them a bundle of time as they plan their future games. And get yourself four hours of "air time" to promote your course and bring them back for another round.

Take Dylan's advice... "if you find someone that gives you all of their love... take it to your heart don't let it stray... for one thing's for certain... you will surely be a-hurtin'... if you throw it all away... if you throw it all away."

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2024

#20 Just Our Opinion

Dennis Miller is my all-time favorite comedian/philosopher, mostly because of his famous rants where he would go on a titanically-opinionated lecture on a topic only to end it with... “Of course, that’s just my opinion... and I could be wrong.”

While we can’t quite match Miller’s epic sarcasm skills, we have a strong opinion about the current market for golfer’s apps. We think it’s very obviously broken... it’s fragmented and inconvenient for golfers, it’s too expensive and not impactful enough for golf course operators... it needs to be fixed and we think we know how to do it.

There is one fly in the ointment. The market has not exactly been clamoring for the solution we are offering in which golfers can use the app anywhere, but golf course operators control the content.

That doesn’t deter our Apparation team... yet... we’re inspired by the old Steve Jobs philosophy... here it is in his words:

“Some people say, “Give the customers what they want.” But that’s not my approach. Our job is to figure out what they’re going to want before they do. I think Henry Ford once said, “If I’d asked customers what they wanted, they would have told me, ‘A faster horse!’” People don’t know what they want until you show it to them. That’s why I never rely on market research. Our task is to read things that are not yet on the page.”

We fervently believe that the golf industry will benefit big time from an evolution of golfer’s apps... and we’re either going to succeed on that premise or fall on our swords trying. We can’t do it alone, though... we need a small army of Early Adopters to make or break this idea. Please join us on the quest... the cost is low, the potential upside is high... and you’ll have a lot of fun collaborating with some of your more courageous and innovative peers.

Of course, that’s just our opinion... and we could be wrong.

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2024

#21 Your Best Salespeople

Every course has their army of best salespeople... no, we're not talking about your Event Director... we're talking about the hard-working souls who shoulder the burden of organizing the tee times for their groups of 4, 8, 12, 16, 20 or even more playing partners.

This thankless task is essential... if these organizers don't initiate the action, many people would play far less often.

How do you reward these heroes? Do you reward them at all? Do you even say thanks?

How would you like to be able to reward your super organizers by making their job much, much easier and less stressful?

The tee time planning capabilities embedded in CloudClubhouse are a godsend for tee time organizers. CloudClubhouse saves time, reduces headaches and increases the probability that they'll wind up with full foursomes. And on those terrifying weeks when a star organizer is sick or traveling or otherwise indisposed, CloudClubhouse makes it far easier for a group of golfers to pass the torch to a back-up organizer without missing a beat.

Reward your best salespeople by equipping them with CloudClubhouse. It's a win-win... more convenience for them and more full foursomes for you.

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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2024

#22 Win-Win-Win-Win-Win-Win-Win-Win...

“The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People” was one of the best-selling business books of all time... if you’ve never read it, it’s worth your time.

One of the more memorable habits author Steven Covey described was “Think Win-Win”... Covey asserted that people who demand win-win solutions outperform those who settle for or even seek win-lose outcomes. Covey went so far as to say that we should all adopt an attitude of “win-win or no deal”.

That struck a chord with me. In thinking about my own business career, I always sought out partners who understood win-win and avoided those who didn’t care if I lost if they felt that they ‘won’.

Apparation believes in win-win... but we also believe that doesn’t necessarily go far enough. Even in our most straightforward Cloudclubhouse relationships, we need to seek win-win-win results in which golfers, golf course operators and Apparation all benefit.

But to really make CloudClubhouse successful, we obsess over making sure that we create wins for all participants... golf course management software companies, golf instructors, golf equipment suppliers, golf publishers, etc.

If an organization can provide value to golfers, we want to help them win. Win-win-win-win-win-win-win-win... is the outcome we strive for.

It reminds us of another one of our favorite philosophies... this one from Mother Teresa... “I can do things you cannot do. You can do things I cannot do. Together we can do great things.”

Let’s do great things together.

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2024

#23 App Architecture 101

File today's CloudClubhouse Diary entry under "things you don't really need to know but just might come in handy sometime".

We thought you might benefit from a little knowledge about the "architecture" of the CloudClubhouse app, so every few weeks we'll take you a little deeper into the underlying technology.

Let's start with some basics, courtesy of Amazon Web Services:

"An application is a (piece of) software that lets you exchange information with customers and help them complete specific tasks. Different types of applications, or apps, are based on their development method and internal functionality.

Web apps are delivered over an internet browser. Users don't need to install them on their devices.

Native apps, on the other hand, are built for a specific platform or device type. The user must install the appropriate software version on their device of choice.

Hybrid apps are native applications with a web browser embedded inside them."

Don't believe anyone who tells you that "native apps are best" or "web apps are best" or even "hybrid apps are best". No type of app is "best" in all situations. The best approach for developing an app depends on the desired functionality and reach and on the available resources.

Having said all of that, CloudClubhouse is a hybrid app... we believe that provides us with best of both worlds for the specific functionality we are trying to deliver to golfers, golf course operators and other related suppliers.

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2024

#24 What's An Availability Engine?

You probably know what a 3rd party tee time booking engine is. There are plenty of examples like GolfNow, Supreme Golf and others... sites where a golfer can go to book tee times on any of a wide variety of courses.

3rd Party Booking engines have pros and cons... they provide convenience to golfers but many course operators do not like to be disintermediated and now that course rules regarding pre-payment and dynamic pricing and other factors are changing rapidly it is extremely difficult for a 3rd party site to keep up with every course's rules and regulations.

CloudClubhouse is reluctant to enter the 3rd party tee time booking arena... we believe it treads a little too heavily on the turf of the golf course operator.

But we are very bullish on the notion of a 3rd party tee time availability engine... that's a site where a golfer can easily and quickly determine whether a golf course has any available tee times at the golfer's desired play time and then allows the golfer to be transferred directly to the golf course booking engine to book if they find some availability that they like.

CloudClubhouse already has very significant tee time availability engine capabilities... and we're looking forward to working closely with golf course operators and golf course management software companies to make these capabilities more and more useful for golfers and more and more likely to help course operators cost-effectively expand their marketing reach and sell tee times that otherwise might go unsold.

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2024

#25 The Most Efficient Way To Do Something, Part III

Many golf course operators have spent significant time and money developing carefully crafted marketing materials that are embedded on their branded websites... with beautiful graphics and concise calls to action.

If you're one of those course operators, start thinking about how you want to go about developing marketing material for golfers who are using the CloudClubhouse scorecard while playing your course.

You could go back to the drawing board and spend another wad of time and money developing some new marketing material.

Or this could be yet another example where the most efficient way to do something is not to do it at all. You don't have to develop a bunch of new material. Re-use the great material you have already developed and link scorecard users directly to your website marketing passages as they proceed from hole 2 to 3, 3 to 4, etc.

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2024

#26 The IGDB Is The Foundation

CloudClubhouse sometimes makes the difficult or impossible look easy.

A lot of the CloudClubhouse ‘magic’ is powered by its underlying foundation, the Internet Golf Database (IGDB).

The IGDB includes a directory of every golf course and every significant golf-related business on the planet... it was originally created by Apparation and is now owned and operated by smbGOLF.

Use of the IGDB enables us to offer golfers options to play on over 34,000 golf courses, to post scores and automatically calculate results of side games on any of those courses and to store and use this data forever.

Golf course operators may participate in the process by updating their own facility and course profiles to ensure that they are always up to date.

And if you know about any open golf courses that aren't in the IGDB, let us know... we dare you to identify one.

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2024

#27 Please Help Me Play More Golf

I most likely played my last round of 2024 golf yesterday. The weather here in Minnesota is becoming uncomfortable enough to render golf unenjoyable for my old bones.

Unfortunately, I'm ending 2024 having fallen far short of my original goal of playing 100 rounds on 100 different golf courses. I've reset that to be my 2025 goal... maybe even ratcheting it up a bit.

The reasons I fell short this year partially fell on me... it took a bit longer than I had expected to fully recover from my knee replacement, there were more family and business distractions than I had expected this year and some of my regular playing partners had a shortage of playing time. But I can't help but wonder how many more rounds I would have played with a little help from my friends the local golf course operators.

I often found myself ready, willing and able to play but without a foursome galvanized to join me. It is often awkward to show up as a single... some courses don't even allow people to book as singles and even if they do I am left wondering whether the people I will be paired with will be welcoming or will consider me a drag on their fun.

Course operators... I'm sending out a plea... please help me and others like me play (and pay) more often next year. Participate in the CloudClubhouse Golfer's Network program, provide your customers with some educational emails on how they can use the convenient tee time planning features and post some Join a Game opportunities. I don't know how many other golfers there are out there in the same boat as me, but I know I'm far from the only one.

Let's tap some of that latent demand next year. I (and many other golfers) will have more fun... you'll have more revenues... win-win!

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2024

#28 Why Apparation?

Someone had to step up to solve The Golfer's App Dilemma, but why was Apparation the perfect fit?

You might have expected one of the existing Golf Course Management Software companies to step up... they certainly have the technical capability... but they spend most of their time competing fiercely with one another for tee sheet and POS business so it is unlikely that they would be willing to integrate with an arch competitor to make a collaborative golf marketing solution work smoothly.

Existing 3rd party app providers like The Grint and 18 Birdies could have stepped in, but they seem committed to a b-to-c business model that puts their brand front and center in the customer relationship with golfers.

Existing course-branded app providers seem unwilling to break out of the mold of single-course solutions because the innovative aspects of the multi-course solutions are not currently being demanded by their current customers.

Helping golf course operators grow the market and helping golfers play more golf is a good fit with the various associations (golf course owners, state amateur golf associations, PGA) but building great software is not in their DNA and their governance structures aren't well-aligned with the needs of a multi-year technology investment program.

So... the Apparation team got tired of waiting around for someone else to step into the breach.

We fervently believe that the golf industry will benefit from an evolution of golfer's apps... and we're either going to succeed on that premise or fall on our swords trying. We can't do it alone, though... we need a small army of Early Adopters to make or break this idea.

If you haven't already joined the team, do it NOW.

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024

#29 The Team Is Growing

A big part of the value of being a CloudClubhouse Early Adopter is the company you are keeping.

Early Adopters are a special breed... willing to go where others fear to tread. Success requires curiosity, courage and creativity.

Luckily, our Early Adopters have those characteristics in abundance and the team continues to grow.

Recent additions to the team include:

Ridges at Sand Creek owner Mike Malone, who in addition to operating one of the most successful golf courses in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metro area is a PGA pro and has served on the boards of the Minnesota Golf Association and the Midwest Golf Course Owner's Association.

The Jewel Golf Club general manager Paul Byron, a member of the Kemper Sports team that manages many of the most prominent golf courses in the US. Paul is also a PGA pro and in addition to a long, successful career in the golf industry has been an astute small business owner.

Mike Tozier, co-owner of Links at Northfork, who in addition to overseeing one of the busiest public courses in the Twin Cities, has had a long career as a financial executive in banking and other industries. Mike is an entrepreneur always looking for ways to enhance his customers' experiences and fatten up the bottom line.

Dave Tentis, a legendary Upper Midwest competitive golfer, long-time PGA pro and general manager of Troy Burne, one of the top tier public courses in the MSP Metro. In addition to all of his other bona fides, Dave is one of the truly nicest gentlemen you'll ever meet.

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2024

#30 RIDICULE. OPPOSE. ACCEPT.

According to 19th century German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer:

“All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.”

We can all think of examples where he was spot on... perhaps the most famous being the tiff that Galileo got into with the Catholic Church over whether Earth was the center of the universe.

I doubt that Schopenhauer was thinking about the market for golfer smartphone apps when he made his pronouncement, but I’m kinda hoping that his rule applies here as well.

Some people who we have talked to have pooh-poohed the practicality of an app that a golfer can use for free on any course, funded by golf course operators who can collectively control the content delivered through the app with no 3rd party brand sitting between the golfers and golf course operators. “Why would golf courses pay for an app that enables golfers to play courses other than their own?” Or course we are providing you with a steady diet of daily posts that answer that question and a growing number of course operators are heeding the message.

We’ve created enough awareness and traction that more people are paying attention to the idea and some vested interests have expressed at least verbal opposition to the idea because it might be disruptive to their proprietary interests. We haven’t quite reached the “violent” opposition stage yet... we’re hoping perhaps we can skip over that.

We continue to believe that this concept is good for golfers... without a doubt it will help many of them play more golf... and it is good for golf course operators... who will benefit from this highly effective example of co-opetition... so if we can persist, we will eventually a point where it is self-evident that it is a good thing for the golf industry.

We are still at a stage where we are trying to gather enough forward-thinking early adopters to give the concept enough support to enable it to flourish.

If you haven’t already joined the fight, we hope you will do so TODAY... and will recruit some like-minded colleagues to join the fray.

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2024

#31 7 Habits of Highly Effective CloudClubhouse Subscribers

I mentioned in a recent post that I was a fan of the Steven Covey book “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”... it’s a classic.

Let’s take a page from Covey’s book today and talk about “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective CloudClubhouse Subscribers”. Today we’ll introduce seven ways that golf course operators can use CloudClubhouse to generate hard financial benefits for their business.

Yes, CloudClubhouse delivers a lot of soft benefits in the form of stickier customer relationships, expanded marketing reach, etc. But most course operators are only going to invest in a CloudClubhouse subscription if they can see, feel and touch the benefits it produces.

We’ll preface the list by saying that Apparation can’t guarantee a certain level of benefits. Some courses will generate bigger numbers than others. It is always challenging to precisely measure benefits since CloudClubhouse use isn’t the only variable that you will experience from year to year.

But if you adopt even a few of these habits, it is almost unimaginable that you won’t generate a 10x or larger return on your CloudClubhouse investment.

Without further ado, here’s the list of the 7 Habits of Highly Effective CloudClubhouse Subscribers. We’ll devote a full daily post to each of these habits over the next week:

- #1 Re-Brand Your Worst Tee Times
- #2 Reward Your Best Customers
- #3 Talk and Talk Until They Say Yes
- #4 Share Your Bully Pulpit
- #5 Use the Power of the Network
- #6 Get People Talking... and Eating... and Drinking
- #7 Raise The Rent

We know that not every one of these ideas will resonate with every course operator, but even if you only embrace a few of these ideas you will generate a very healthy return on your financial investment in CloudClubhouse... and we think you’ll have a good time doing it.

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2024

#32 Habit #1 - Re-brand Your Worst Tee Times

Other than true outliers like Pebble Beach and a few others, every public golf course has some tee times that usually don't fill.

CloudClubhouse offers you an opportunity to up the odds that those low demand tee times will be filled by paying golfers. Use the Join a Game feature to post these tee times and then market the heck out of them.

For example, you could post the last tee time before your Twilight rates kick in and brand it as a "Lonely Golfer" or "Mixer" or "Meet Some New Friends" game. Promote them on your website, in your email blasts, on your tee time confirmations... let everyone know.

Using CloudClubhouse's administrative capabilities, you can post these tee times for the entire season into join a Game in less than 5 minutes.

A \$40 course that fills just 10% of the available times would yield about \$3k.

A \$60 course that fills just 30% of the available times would yield \$13k.

A \$100 course that fills 75% of the available times would yield almost \$55k.

There's a corollary strategy that we'll cover another time... sell your BEST tee times for a premium.

This one habit alone can easily cover the full cost of your CloudClubhouse subscription and generate a very healthy ROI.

What have you got to lose? Just some empty slots on your tee sheet.

	10%	25%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	75%
\$40	\$2,928	\$7,320	\$8,784	\$11,712	\$14,640	\$17,568	\$20,496	\$21,960
\$50	\$3,660	\$9,150	\$10,980	\$14,640	\$18,300	\$21,960	\$25,620	\$27,450
\$60	\$4,392	\$10,980	\$13,176	\$17,568	\$21,960	\$26,352	\$30,744	\$32,940
\$70	\$5,124	\$12,810	\$15,372	\$20,496	\$25,620	\$30,744	\$35,868	\$38,430
\$80	\$5,856	\$14,640	\$17,568	\$23,424	\$29,280	\$35,136	\$40,992	\$43,920
\$90	\$6,588	\$16,470	\$19,764	\$26,352	\$32,940	\$39,528	\$46,116	\$49,410
\$100	\$7,320	\$18,300	\$21,960	\$29,280	\$36,600	\$43,920	\$51,240	\$54,900

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2024

#33 Habit #2 - Reward Your Best Customers

Your best customers aren't necessarily the ones that play (and pay) the most for their own rounds. They're more likely the unsung heroes of the golf industry... the "organizers" who herd their group of fellow golfers to the course every week in packs of 4, 8, 12, 16, 20 or more.

The CloudClubhouse Plan a Game feature saves organizers tons of time and makes it more likely that they'll be able to fill their foursomes. By providing these features in an app that they can download for free and use anywhere, you'll save each of them \$100 or more per year in app fees.

All of that convenience will help many golfers play (and pay for) an occasional additional round. If we apply that convenience factor to your 500 most loyal 'non-member' regulars who pay for each round (i.e., not your season pass holders)...

A \$50 course that gets just 10% to play one additional round will yield \$2,500

A \$60 course that gets just 25% to play one additional round will yield \$7,500

A \$100 course that gets golfers to play an average of one additional round will yield \$50,000

This one habit alone can easily cover the full cost of your CloudClubhouse subscription and generate a very healthy ROI.

Give your best customers a gift that keeps on giving.

	0.05	0.10	0.20	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.00
\$40	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$20,000
\$50	\$1,250	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$6,250	\$12,500	\$18,750	\$25,000
\$60	\$1,500	\$3,000	\$6,000	\$7,500	\$15,000	\$22,500	\$30,000
\$70	\$1,750	\$3,500	\$7,000	\$8,750	\$17,500	\$26,250	\$35,000
\$80	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$40,000
\$90	\$2,250	\$4,500	\$9,000	\$11,250	\$22,500	\$33,750	\$45,000
\$100	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$12,500	\$25,000	\$37,500	\$50,000

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2024

#34 Habit #3 - Talk and Talk Until They Say Yes

My favorite moment ever with my oldest granddaughter was when she told me that she was going to talk her mother into letting her have some candy when she got home. When I asked her what it meant to “talk someone into something”, she gave me a huge grin and said... “Oh... it’s when you talk and talk until they say yes”.

And she was only four at the time... a world class negotiator already.

Well, we don’t recommend that you badger your customers into submission, but we do think we’ve given you an amazing opportunity to talk with your customers via CloudClubhouse.

Today you talk to them for a minute when they check in, maybe for a minute or two each time they encounter the beverage cart and then maybe for a few minutes if they stop in the clubhouse after the round.

CloudClubhouse gives you an opportunity for 120,000 hours of “air time” to talk to your customers (30,000 rounds x 4 hours) by enabling you to post promotional messages into the transition between each hole on the scorecard.

Use that time to promote to them whatever you want to promote... surely all of that “talking” will get them to say “yes” to some of your promotions.

Sales of only \$50 a day of services that generate a 40% margin will yield \$2,745.

Sales of \$250 a day of services that generate a 50% margin will yield \$18,300.

Start talking!

	20%	30%	40%	50%	75%
\$25	\$458	\$1,144	\$1,373	\$1,830	\$2,288
\$50	\$915	\$2,288	\$2,745	\$3,660	\$4,575
\$100	\$1,830	\$4,575	\$5,490	\$7,320	\$9,150
\$250	\$4,575	\$11,438	\$13,725	\$18,300	\$22,875

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2024

#35 Habit #4 - Share Your Bully Pulpit

Many course operators sell advertising space on their paper scorecards

As you start to transition golfers to your CloudClubhouse digital scorecard, you open up a whole category of advertising space to sell.

Sale of \$10/day digital scorecard ads to just 2 advertisers will yield over \$3,600.

Sale of \$50/day digital scorecard ads to just 3 advertisers will yield over \$27,000.

Unlike paper scorecard ads that are locked in for the full year, digital ads are much more flexible. We know you don't want to putzing with these things every day, but being able to sell in monthly or seasonal increments could open up a lot of new relationships.

Make it known that you're open for business and you might be surprised how many local businesses beat a pathway to your door... or first tee.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
\$10	\$1,830	\$3,660	\$5,490	\$7,320	\$9,150	\$10,980
\$25	\$4,575	\$9,150	\$13,725	\$18,300	\$22,875	\$27,450
\$50	\$9,150	\$18,300	\$27,450	\$36,600	\$45,750	\$54,900
\$100	\$18,300	\$36,600	\$54,900	\$73,200	\$91,500	\$109,800
\$200	\$36,600	\$73,200	\$109,800	\$146,400	\$183,000	\$219,600

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2024

#36 Habit #5 - Use The Power of the Network

The CloudClubhouse Golfer’s Network is an example of co-opetition at its best.

Many golfers who live within shouting distance of your golf course won’t sign up for your email mailing list because they don’t play your course regularly... but they may be fine receiving a weekly CloudClubhouse email because it contains a wide variety of opportunities at multiple golf courses.

If you are in an area that 10-20 CloudClubhouse subscribers, you will have an opportunity to reach a sizable number of golfers that you can’t reach directly. We believe you could expand your marketing reach by somewhere in the range of 25,000 golfers... and you can post CloudClubhouse Promo messages in the app that these golfers will be notified of each week.

If 1 in 400 CloudClubhouse Golfer’s Network email recipients in your area purchases an offer from you with a \$50 margin, that will yield \$3,125.

If 1 in 200 CloudClubhouse Golfer’s Network email recipients in your area purchases an offer from you with a \$100 margin, that will yield \$12,500.

Make sure you’ve always got a CloudClubhouse Promo message posted and take advantage of this significantly expanded marketing reach.

	0.05	0.10	0.20	0.25	0.50	0.75	1.00
\$40	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$20,000
\$50	\$1,250	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$6,250	\$12,500	\$18,750	\$25,000
\$60	\$1,500	\$3,000	\$6,000	\$7,500	\$15,000	\$22,500	\$30,000
\$70	\$1,750	\$3,500	\$7,000	\$8,750	\$17,500	\$26,250	\$35,000
\$80	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$40,000
\$90	\$2,250	\$4,500	\$9,000	\$11,250	\$22,500	\$33,750	\$45,000
\$100	\$2,500	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$12,500	\$25,000	\$37,500	\$50,000

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2024

#37 Habit #6 - Get People Talking... and Eating... and Drinking

CloudClubhouse enables you to engage golfers when they are planning their rounds, when they are playing... and even between rounds.

By providing some conversation-worthy content, you'll increase the chance that your customers will stick around after their round for conversation... and

Over time, we'll give you ample opportunity to inject fun golf-related content to the app for your subscribers' viewing pleasure. But we've already gotten the party started with some fun features that can provide golfers more fun than they typically have on the course.

My personal favorite is the "Courses Played" feature... a golfer can use it to compare the list of courses they have played with that of any of their playing partners. They can see which courses they have both played, which courses that they have played but the other golfer hasn't and vice versa. This can spawn a conversation that could last hours.

And there are other features like this. For example, how many of the Golf Digest Top 100 courses have you played? How many Tom Fazio designs? What do your playing partners have to say about some of the courses in the vicinity that you have never played? There is really no end to the geeky golf trivia that you can dive into... all the while sipping on another brew or inhaling another appetizer. The only downside is that these features might be that good for our waistslines.

If 1 in 50 foursomes spend \$5 per golfer while gabbing, that will yield \$3,000.

If 1 in 10 foursomes spend an additional \$10 per golfer, that will yield \$30,000.

Create some trivia and rewards contests around this kind of information and ring that cash register all day long.

	2%	4%	6%	8%	10%
\$5	\$3,000	\$6,000	\$9,000	\$12,000	\$15,000
\$10	\$6,000	\$12,000	\$18,000	\$24,000	\$30,000
\$25	\$15,000	\$30,000	\$45,000	\$60,000	\$75,000
\$50	\$30,000	\$60,000	\$90,000	\$120,000	\$150,000

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2024

#38 Habit #7 - Raise the Rent

Most course operators will revise their rates... or consider a revision... at least once a year.

The next time that you are revising your course rates, consider adding a modest bump to reflect the new amenity that you are providing. Since you are providing golfers with a CloudClubhouse app that has features that would cost them \$100 or more to acquire by other means, it would certainly seem fair that you factor that into your pricing. All of your players won't use the app, but if you make them aware of the full range of features, a growing percentage will.

At the full retail price of \$2,500/year, a golf course that hoses 30,000 a year is paying just over 8 cents per round... and an early adopter paying the \$1,000 early adopter rate is paying just above a measly 3 cents per round.

A \$0.50 to \$1 bump in the green fee rate will yield \$15k-\$30k and a healthy ROI.

The average golfer playing 20-25 rounds a year is paying only 20%-25% of what they would pay to use premium features on something like The Grint or 18 Birdies. And by not requiring golfers to explicitly pay for the app and are allowing them to use it everywhere they play, you will maximize the number of people who create an account and use the app.

And your customers might be less likely to grumble about your rate hike when they realize all of the ways that they can benefit from the new amenity that you are providing to them.

CloudClubhouse Diary – As of November 13, 2024

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2024

#39 Thanksgiving Day

That's right, your intrepid CloudClubhouse crew doesn't even take Thanksgiving Day off.

During the last seven days, we've fed you seven very specific, very executable ways to generate returns on the modest investment required to acquire a CloudClubhouse subscription. We hope you will agree that while not every one of these ideas may be a fit for your course, at least some of them are and it should be as easy to generate a very healthy ROI on your modest investment in a CloudClubhouse subscription as it is to find a piece of pumpkin pie on Thanksgiving Day.

We'll continue to feed you an idea a day.

No need to say thank you... we know you are grateful... you are welcome.

While you using this as food for thought to plan how you will reap the benefits of a CloudClubhouse subscription in 2025, we're going to spend the rest of the day thinking about how we're going to use CloudClubhouse to help us play (and pay) more often.

My personal goal is to play at least 100 rounds of golf during 2025 on 100 different golf courses.

Please line up some Join a Games at your course so there is a high likelihood that I and other like-minded golfers will see you soon.