PROS being disturbed when members kick is an old story in the golf business, but the tale is rare of a pro who is concerned if he doesn't get complaints about any of those things that are liable to go wrong in the best regulated families.

Jack Drucker is the pro who looks for trouble.

That's a far more delicate job than handling trouble when it comes right up and smacks you, as it does often enough in this peculiar business of pro golf. You can't be obviously looking for grief or you'll stir up imaginary misery where it doesn't exist, but if you take a tip out of Drucker's successful experience you'll be a secret service man on the hunt for anything that might have gone wrong.

Drucker is the pleasant-panned, competent young Dutchman who serves the Chicago Golf Club, that veteran, aristocratic organization on the western output of the Chicago district. He came out from the east as a youngster to work as Chicago Golf's pro. He returned to the New York metropolitan district after several years at Chicago Golf and had the unusual experience of having the club he had left draft him back into its employ. This means Chicago Golf rates Drucker as AAA1.

Jack has those traditional Dutch virtues of thoroughness, diligence and good management of the dollar without squeezing those guilders in a death-grip in his mitt. He listens and looks and if he sees an idea in instruction or shop operation that looks O.K. he adopts it promptly. He is quiet and able. All of those qualifications make him quite a guy for any club's money. But they are qualifications that are shared by a number of other professionals at gold-coast clubs, of whom you seldom read on the sport pages unless they finish their Monday morning shopping in time to take part in the pro or pro-amateur neighborhood tournaments on their off days.

So, outside of tagging Drucker as a good steady performer and a credit to pro golf, I never figured there was much of a different story about the guy until one day I asked him what had wiped that kid grin from his face.

Jack Suffers Rare Complaint

"I haven't been able to find anything wrong," he complained.

"Are you screwy?" I asked. "All Monday morning visiting with the boys on State street and Jackson boulevard, and nothing wrong? Keep it quiet from the rest of the lads or you will be kicked out of the PGA as being guilty of conduct unbecoming to a pro and gentleman."

"You don't get me. I mean there is absolutely no sign of anything wrong out at the club." Drucker was plenty puzzled.

After I had recovered from this unusual complaint I got some dope from Jack on his policy which I am sure will interest other pros, and probably will have a few ideas in it for officials, greenkeepers and managers. So here's the way Drucker looks at the pro job at an exclusive club (from this point in Jack is being quoted):

Where there are human beings there are bound to be cases of things not running perfectly. Even Robinson Crusoe and Friday had trouble on a desert isle. Because there is bound to be something wrong some time, officials of older and higher clubs, being very successful business men, figure the best that possibly can be done is to hire fellows who locate the slightest indication of faults and correct them before these faults get serious. If everything was bound to run smooth all the time at Chicago Golf, would the club scour around and get a fellow like John MacGregor and pay him for his expert attention to the course? Would the club have hired Tony Faesen to manage its clubhouse? Or would I have had my job...
when it could have its choice of a hun-
dred fellows? No! If everything was
going to be perfect all the time, Chicago
Golf could have hired any punks and
they'd be O.K. for the job.

So what does that situation put up to
me in the pro department?

Troubles the Members Don't Know

It means that I have to be on the look-
out constantly to see that if any little
thing goes wrong in the slightest detail I
am there to catch it and make it right. A
pro who is on the job can discover these
things and correct them a lot of times
when the member doesn't even know there
has been a slip, but the pro doesn't dare—
or shouldn't—take the risk of the same
error being repeated. It requires a lot of
watching, but it's worth it. A fellow has
to do it to be the man a high-class club
wants.

So I have to ease around diplomatically
and keep my ears and eyes hair-triggered.
If there is the slightest complaint to my
assistant he is instructed to give me the
high-sign if I am in the shop, or to tip me
off right after I come in if I happen to be
out of the lesson tee.

Seldom Find 100% Wrong Guys

That old dope about the customer
always being right isn't far wrong in the
pro shop. Even if he's wrong he's right,
because he is the man who pays. There
are two things you can learn from com-
plaints; either that your merchandise or
method of doing business is wrong, or
that your way of handling the man or
woman who complains has been wrong. I
have been in the pro business a fairly
long time, and I have yet to see a member
of any club where I have worked whom I
would class as an All-American, 100% un-
reasonably . . . well, you know.

They probably exist, but the job of put-
thing them right side up is one that be-
longs to the club officials, who will be
glad to handle it for the peace of the
community.

In pro merchandising this business of
governing your operations in a way to
avoid complaints calls for a lot of deli-
cacy. At the exclusive clubs you can't
have the least indication of forced selling.
But your members expect—and have a
right to expect—the best of everything
and the first view of the good new things.
You can't stock everything, so you have
to use a lot of judgment and be constantly
shopping and investigating for fear the
members may discover something that
ought to be in your shop but isn't.

They often are shrewd buyers at these
exclusive clubs. They are not tight and
certainly not cheap, but they have to see
value. If any merchandise goes wrong in
even a minor degree, I have to make it
right. My club inspection as the clubs go
through the club-cleaner's hands is as care-
ful as in some factories. I keep an eye on
my club-cleaner and see that he is a well-
trained and conscientious boy. He has to
be on the lookout for trouble, and so does
my assistant.

I hear pros talk about the troubles in
the golf business and am willing to admit
there are plenty, but our club members all
have troubles in their businesses that in
comparison don't seem to make the pro
troubles too large for any of us to handle.
The big edge that we have over most re-
tailers is that we are handy when the
merchandise we sell is being used, so if
anything goes wrong we are right there to
make it right. Customers of other retail-
ers, in case of any real or imaginary fault,
usually kick to everyone except the fellow
who sold them the stuff. Then they don't
go back to the same dealer to buy again,
and they ruin that retailer's chances for
business with their friends.

* * *

With that Drucker had said his little
piece and walked off with his team-mate
and pal, MacGregor, greenkeeper of Chi-
cago Golf. This combination is one of the
most loyal I know of in golf. Drucker will
argue in hot spirit if anyone might suggest
Mac isn't the world's greatest greenkeeper
and Mac maintains that if every club had
a pro like Drucker the problems of the
clubs would be cut by 50%.

I don't know whether the Drucker yarn
strikes the gang the same way it hit me,
but it looks to me like Jack's policy of
looking for mistakes before the mistakes
come to a head, and being prepared to
handle them, is something that hasn't been
mentioned before as the reason for a good
club hiring a pro who knows the business
thoroughly. That's something that is worth
a lot of money to a club. The way Drucker
handles this detail at a club where the
members are quiet, well-bred people who
are not chronic squawkers identifies him
as a star trouble-shooter and an accom-
plished diplomat.