There's Pro Profit In Good Assistants
By JOHN M. BRENNAN

Spencer Murphy, pro at Glen Oaks GC, Great Neck, L.I., had just signed Jay Hebert, one of the many promising Southerners playing the winter circuit, and his friendly rival at nearby Fresh Meadow CC, formerly Lakeville, Al Ciuci, was lauding Murphy's action.

"Hebert is an up-and-coming kid and will be an asset to the pro staff at Glen Oaks," declared Ciuci, the LIPGA president and MPGA tournament chairman for the past decade. "What golf needs most, in my opinion is more young blood in the pro ranks. Older professionals, instead of worrying too much about their own security should take on one or two younger fellows, teach them the game and help them to make good in the tournament world."

Murphy, who signed Hebert, a 25-year-old Bayou Frenchman from Louisiana, to augment his already impressive teaching and playing staff at swank Glen Oaks, is high on the potentials of the former Marine captain, "We needed another young pro and I picked Hebert as the fellow with the most promise," suggested Murphy. "My staff of teachers includes Pete Burke, brother of Bill, the former national open champion; Eddie ("Senator") Murphy, my brother, and Whitey Open. With 500 active members, we can use them all, with Jay and Pete wearing the Glen Oaks tag in the tournaments."

Getting back to Ciuci, who was one of the first pros to sing the praises of Hebert, then an assistant to Lew Worsham at Oakmont (Pa.) CC, several years ago, Al insists that the head pro at a club must take into consideration the fact that golf is a business, just like a department store.

"Just observe the operation of any department store," said Ciuci, "and the one with the most number of sales people is the one that is most likely doing the most business. That's logical. In my opinion, it is good business for the pro and club to keep as big a pro staff as can be afforded and kept busy. I started with Sarazen when Gene showed promise up in Bridgeport, Conn. While at old Fresh Meadow in flushing, I took on Leon Pettigrew when he came east from Indiana, where he won the amateur title and looked like a comer. Right now I carry three assistants and do a lot of the teaching myself."

Encouragement Pays Off

Ciuci pointed out that in the New York Metropolitan district, the more successful pros have been the ones who have encouraged the younger fellows in their shops. The first name mentioned, of course, was Craig Wood, long pro at Deal, N.J., CC and later associated with Winged Foot GC at Mamaroneck, N.Y.

"Like the late Al Smith, whose great political accomplishments were realized through his ability to choose the right assistants, Craig added to his fame by introducing the right fellows in his pro shops," asserted Ciuci. "It's the same with his Winged Foot successor, Claude Harmon, who was encouraged by Wood; Jack Burke at Metropolis, a product of the Harmon school and the veteran George Jacobus at Ridgewood (N.J.) CC, where he turned out Byron Nelson as a splendid example. These fellows are smart to encourage our youth. They help themselves financially and at the same time are helping golf, generally."

Wood, whose golfing exploits helped etch records for two decades, always advocated the policy that young talent should be encouraged. Craig insisted on top-flight as-
assistants, starting at Deal, where he took
on Dick Metz. When he moved over to
Forest Hills Field Club in Bloomfield, N.J.,
the Blond Bomber signed Paul Runyan,
later to become one of the nation's greats
in spite of an unorthodox swing.

Winged Foot, Stars' Cradle
Craig, when he moved across the Hud-
sen to Winged Foot, with its more than 750
members, added Harmon, then, a virtual
unknown but tremendously popular and
promising lad, to his staff. Chick Rutan,
Ray Hill, Jimmy McHale, Shelly Mayfield,
and Jack Burke, son of the great Jack of
yesteryear, also served as Winged Foot
playing and teaching assistants.

Wood often used to tell the members at
Winged Foot, before he retired to be suc-
cceeded by Harmon, that he wouldn't con-
dering employing an assistant who couldn't
"take him" out on the course. That also
was the credo of the veteran Bill Green,
retired Rumson's pro and a pal of Wood's for
many years in New Jersey. That's the way
Vic Ghezzi got his start — by beating
Green one day.

Burke, a protege of Harmon at Winged
Foot, took over at Metropolis GC in White
Plains, where Runyan worked for so many
years. Burke, like Wood and Harmon, feels
that promising assistants prove a boon in
the pro shop.

Another one of the Winged Foot gradu-
ates, Shelly Mayfield, Texan of consider-
able promise, has been signed as top pro
at the Rockaway Hunt Club at Cedarhurst,
LI, where Jack West retired after serv-
ing 35 years.

Burke announced on the winter tour from
St. Petersburg, Fla., after winning the
Open there, that Bobby Watson, another
lad from the Lone Star state and Stan
Dudas, have been signed to become his
associates at Metropolis.

In the meantime, Buck Luce, who has
been a Man Friday to Harmon at Winged
Foot, and later worked with Burke at
Metropolis, has landed a lucrative job as
head pro — at Pelham CC, a spot once
filled by Long Jim Barnes.

Ciuci contrasted the financial setup at
such places as Glen Oaks, his own Fresh
Meadow, Metropolis, Winged Foot and
Ridgewood with some of the other clubs of
the district where pros function on a more
conservative basis.

"The average golf club member looks to
the golf pro for inspiration and advice," rea-
oned Ciuci. "If the member reads that
Joe So-and-So wins a tournament, he right-
fully reasons the fellow must know some-
thing about the sport. He seeks out the
fellows for advice and is quite satisfied if
the fellow can help him improve his own
game. It's like life generally, we all look
up to some idol. In golf a player with
talent can cash in by making members,
who are eager and willing, pay for advice.
It all gets down to the fundamental prin-
ciples of running a retail store. If one has
the right product, the customer who wants
it is willing to pay and good pro manage-
ment sees that the product is presented."

According to Ciuci, who knows the
answers in a golfing sense, a master profes-
sional should be eager to bring into his
employ a young player showing talent. He
should encourage the boy, for the sake of
golf — and his own sake. The members will
respect him more for the move.

It is short-sighted on the part of any
pro to try to handle whatever teaching
business there is at a golf club, especially
any of the bigger ones, when smart pro
management can build more interest and
his own profits with a bigger live staff.
The majority of progressive pros feel as
Ciuci does, that pro golf needs more young
blood and the only way to bring it into the
business is via the pro shop as assistants.

Spencer Murphy, probably the outstand-
ing pro of the country when it comes to
moving merchandise, believes that by pro-
essionals carrying several promising
young pros as teachers and players they
are making matters easier for the USGA.

"It's only fair to the kids to help them
along," said Murphy. "Everybody needs a
lift in business and what is golf if not big
business? We know there are hundreds of
amateur golfers parading, or masquerad-
ing as simon-pures who would be better
off if they were to take jobs as assistant
pros. The USGA apparently feels along the
same line, for they have been threatening
for years to crack down on so-called semi
pros in the game. If the pros, the older
ones I mean, want to do golf a great ser-
dice, let them absorb these border-line 'ama-
teurs' who should be assistant pros in the
first place. Teach them the business and
direct them so they will add to the service
and earnings of a department that is the
head pro's heavy responsibility."

Five Bids for 1951 Jaycee
National Junior Tourney

Bids for the 1951 National Junior Cham-
pionship of the U.S. Junior Chamber of
Commerce have been received from Ojai,
Calif.; Coral Gables, Fla.; Great Falls,
Mont.; Durham, N.C., and Virginia Beach,
Va. Each of the organizations has given
evidence of having facilities, finances and
ability to stage this championship which
has the largest entry list of any golf
championship in the world.

Peddlers' Set July 31

Golf Peddlers' annual tournament for
the Bill Hoyt memorial trophy will be
played at Elyria (O.) CC, July 3. Arnold
Minkley of Acushnet will defend his title.