Promotion Is Pros’ Big Job

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Golf professionals cannot expect an uninterrupted succession of 1946-1947-1948, with heavy sales, easy money to be made, and some laxity in service. That was too easy. So 1953 is likely to be the Back to Normal year in our profession.

We cannot hope to sell much new equipment to a slowly expanding group of golfers. We must accelerate the recruiting of new players. We must sidetrack some of our high power sales appeal and get to the business of golf service to every member and to our club program in general to promote more play. We must defend golf’s amateurism and build a stronger tournament program in the areas we serve. In 1953 we are going to need more pro service and less sales fanfare.

Most of the golf professionals of my acquaintance, and that covers a bit of ground, have enjoyed fine years of business. The income from pro golf has been higher than the years before the war. Those who know the value of saving a buck here and there need not fear for tomorrow’s bacon and eggs. Therefore, when can the time be more opportune for nailing down our business and giving our greatest service year to golf?

The game needs our best efforts. To give a half portion of service is to sell short the very game that has provided us with a livelihood and has brought us so many thrills and so much satisfaction from our work. Now is the very hour for action. The amateur code is sagging at many of its seams. Who knows better about pros and amateurs than we professionals? New players are begging for a start in golf. Who can steer them into the right channels better than we pros?

Some club members are failing to get the top service that is in balance with the other features of their fine clubs. Who can give this service better than the pros who serve these members?

Golf is crying for its chance to prove that it is indeed the broadest means of recreation for the American people. Who, better than we pros can promote this potential into a reality that will send our professional to heights never dreamed of before. This is a daily challenge to all of us. 1953 is the year when we should tackle these vital issues.

Sell Golf to More People

How? That is always the big word. The answer — tackle it and get the job done. Get more golfers by selling the game to more people. Provide opportunity to play by having good rental sets always available for the casual player. This player today may be your staunch club member tomorrow. Get more people to hit their first golf ball. Promote new player contests. Organize invitation events where each member brings a non-golfer for hitting balls at your club, putting contests, approaching contests and a few pertinent remarks about the fun of golf from the golf professional. Get them into the fold and lead them into the greatest game they will ever know. Remember the times that elderly members have remarked to us, “Gee, I would give anything, if I HAD STARTED THIS GAME TWENTY YEARS AGO. Look what I have missed.” We can help millions of people discover this great game of ours. 1953 can be the year of the great pilgrimage to golf.

In its infancy today, the district golf range clinic will be tomorrow’s great rallying point for golf. Here the local district pros can meet the people face to face and hand to hand. What a sales opening for golf! Get them to know the feel of a well hit shot. Explain how easily golf can be tried. Steer away from the old saying, “you must know how to swim — before you enter the water.” In the great crusade to get more people to play more golf, get them to hitting balls in any way possible. After the bug has bitten them is time enough to shape their playing technique.

2-Minute Lesson

During the past two years in my group lessons I have tried a 2-minute lesson. This is aimed at the few people who come for a lesson and then drop out. I tell them that if they could never get more than 2 minutes of golf instruction here is what they should know. First; one end of the golf club is HEAVY, second that if right-handed, the left hand holds the upper end of the club with the right-hand below. Keep the hands close together. Place the club behind the ball and stand so you can easily reach the ball. NOW, BY SWINGING THE HEAVY END OF THE GOLF CLUB BACK AND THROUGH, HIT THE BALL. It is surprising how many players can do fairly well with such a brief and simple start.

Native ability and love of the game of
golf is the native flint; BUT IT TAKES
THE STEEL OF COMPETITION TO
SPARK THE GOLF GAME. Therefore
tournaments and competition are of ut-
most importance to golf.

There has been a laxity about some
district and local tournaments in late
years. Prizes are out of balance, empha-
sis is on winter rules, calculatas, member
wagers and such things. Many of such
events are not equal in standard to the
great game of golf. It is therefore our
professional duty to exercise our power
of persuasion and our superior knowledge
of tournament affairs to build stronger
events in our localities. It is our basic
duty to know the rules thoroughly and
make our decisions from the rule book
quickly and decisively. The Amateurs
expect this from us. And along the lines
of rules, beware the self-appointed rules
expert who can distort the rules of golf
and use them for his own gain. Many
cases come to light of false rules inter-
pretations causing grief to ill informed
players.

No Place for Shady Characters

We know professional golf. We are
aware of its difficulties and hard spots
and we know how kind it can be. We
know how exacting its entrance require-
ments must be. We know it is not an
easy spot for play-boy golfers who want
to be connected with fine clubs so that
they can play golf each day and never
have a hard lick to hit.

So we have the great responsibility of
interpreting the difference between true
professional golf and the pseudo pros and
the fringe amateurs who are trying to
"hustle" a cash gain from the game. The
stain of sordid commercialism is on too
many in amateur golf today. There are
fine yet misguided players who are flirt-
ing with trouble. These fellows want no
part of true pro golf. They dream of soft
jobs secured because they have a fine
golf swing and easy small talk. They
scheme for big prizes at amateur tourn-
aments and hope that some way they can
make material gain from such play. How
quick can we pros tell them that they
cannot make such ventures pay? How
well we know that they are treading on
dangerous grounds. Others of these mis-
guided ones hope for golf angels who will
pay the tariff and give the free swinger
a free ride through leisurely days of golf
playing. Why not tell the truth to such
players as these; give them the bitter
truth? The sooner they find out about
this mirage the better they will be and
the cleaner amateur golf will be.

We must protect the portals of profes-
sional golf. We must seek better types of
young men to break into the profession of
golf. Our eyes should always be on the
alert to find the cleanest and smartest
type of young man in our caddie ranks
and or on our scholastic golf teams. We
should build stronger professionals.

Yes, and we should make it unmistak-
ably clear that there is no twilight road
into pro golf. Make the leap in the bright
sunshine of public knowledge and proper
leadership or shun every sign of shady
half measures that might bring dishonor
to golf and the individual alike.

So, let's look to 1953. A year of nor-
amal sales, without doubt. Let us take
this chance to build a stronger game of
golf. Let us grasp this opportunity to
serve better in our job as professional, as
the community leader of this great game,
as the guardian of professional golf and
amateurism alike and may our 1953 slo-
gan be the same as that great one from
Rotary International, "he profits most,
who serves best."

National Golf Fund, Inc. Is
Organized; Riggins, Pres.

A non-profit corporation has been
formed to administer the proceeds of
National Golf Day, sponsored by the PGA
and Life Magazine. The corporation has
been named National Golf Fund, Inc. and
the first complete report on the success
of National Golf Day was made at its
first meeting held recently in Chicago.

The corporation, with Fred L. Riggins,
Sr. of Port Huron, Mich., will administer
a fund of $80,024 realized from the first
National Golf Day, May 31. Some 14,000
players succeeded in bettering Ben Ho-
 gan's score, their handicaps considered.

The fund will turn over 50% of these
proceeds to the United Services Organi-
zation in accordance with the original
object of the Day, at a formal presenta-
tion ceremony in New York, October 21.
The remaining proceeds of National Golf
Day will later be distributed among
worthy golf charities and projects.

Members of the new corporation include
seven ex-officio members. These include
the three officers of the PGA: Pres. Hor-
ton Smith, Sec. Harry Moffitt and Treas.
Harold Sargent; the Chairman of the PGA
National Advisory Committee, Bing Cros-
by; Pres. of the Western Golf Assn., Gor-
don Kummer; the editor of Golfing and
Golfdom magazines, Herb Graffis; and
the editor of Golf World, Bob Harlow.
Six additional members who are promi-
nent in golf will later be elected by the
present membership.

Directors of the new organization in-
clude Riggins; J. E. King, Vice-President
of Time, Inc.; Milton Woodard, Executive
Secretary of the Western Golf Assn.;
Graffis and Thomas W. Crane, PGA Ex-
cutive Secretary, who has been elected
Secretary-Treasurer. The annual meet-
ing of the Corporation will be held in
Chicago, November 10.