The Professional's Status

*First section of nationwide survey shows concern for contracts, pension plans and erosion of profits.*

Moved by mounting reports that the golf professional's domain is shrinking and that he is not receiving his fair share of the continuing golf boom, GOLFDOM recently undertook an ambitious plan to measure the true picture of the pro's current status and provide an opportunity for him to air his complaints. An elaborate questionnaire was mailed to a cross-section of golf professionals throughout the U.S. seeking pertinent information. Out of a sample group of 2,000, approximately 500 responded—an amazing 25%—and the responding professionals were not hesitant to cast new and brighter light on their problems.

All told, they took time to answer more than 60 questions about their status and the state of their business.

The first part of this analysis appears here. Others, dealing with more specific areas of sales and profits will appear in future issues.

This first section covers an analysis of the answers as they concern the pro himself—his duties and responsibilities; ownership of pro shop or profit arrangements; how he spends his vacation; how much golf he is able to play himself, and his attitude toward contracts, pension plans and the PGA.

The majority of the questions could be answered "yes" or "no," and are included in that manner on the following pages.

Three specific questions on pension plans, contracts, and current activities of the PGA required written answers. The most cogent of these replies have been collected and are given in separate sections under the appropriate heading.

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**PROFILE OF CLUBS IN SURVEY SAMPLE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF CLUB</th>
<th>Private 56.6%</th>
<th>Semi-Private 13.1%</th>
<th>Public 10.6%</th>
<th>Municipal 11.6%</th>
<th>Resort 8.1%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL NO. CLUB MEMBERS</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-99</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>1-99</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td>1-99</td>
<td>87.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-299</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>100-299</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>100-299</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-499</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>300-499</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>300-499</td>
<td>.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 over</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>500 over</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>500 over</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIZE OF GOLF COURSE</th>
<th>9 Holes 26.3%</th>
<th>18 Holes 66.6%</th>
<th>27 Holes 3.7%</th>
<th>36 Holes 2.6%</th>
<th>Over 36 Holes .8%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| FACILITIES OFFERED OTHER THAN GOLF | Bar 69.2% | Restaurant 84.4% | Locker Room 76.9% | Swimming Pools 54.4% | Tennis Courts 31.7% |
THE PRO AND THE SHOP

Who operates (owns) the pro shop?

- Club Pro: 92.7%
- Club: 6.3%
- Concessionaire: 1.0%

If club operates (owns) pro shop, what percentage of the profits do you receive?

- None: 37.5%
- Under 10%: 12.5%
- 10-19%: 18.8%
- 20-29%: 12.5%
- 30% and over: 18.7%

How many months a year is your pro shop open?

- Under 3 months: 1.9%
- 4-6 months: 7.7%
- 7-9 months: 26.4%
- 10-11 months: 6.4%
- 12 months: 57.6%

What do you do in the off-season?*

- Vacation: 56.6%
- Other pro job: 17.6%
- Job outside golf: 35.1%

PERSONAL DATA

How long have you been at your present club?

- Up to 3 years: 33.3%
- 4-6 years: 24.1%
- 7-10 years: 8.6%
- Over 10 years: 34.0%

How many rounds of golf do you play a week?

- None: 5.9%
- 1: 38.9%
- 2: 32.5%
- 3: 10.4%
- 4-6: 10.0%
- 7-10: 2.3%

Have you attended any of the PGA Business Schools?

- Yes: 31.9%
- No: 68.1%

If so, when did you attend the Schools?

- This year: 11.1%
- 1 year ago: 17.3%
- 2 years ago: 12.3%
- 3 years ago: 11.1%
- 4 years ago: 13.6%
- 5 years ago: 12.3%

*Multiple answers, do not add up to 100.

The PGA and pensions

Golf professionals were almost unanimous in their desire for a pension plan to be worked out by the PGA. Most felt that it would be necessary to have such a plan drawn up by outside experts, and that steps in this direction should be taken immediately.

All in favor of a PGA pension plan seemed to be willing to pay higher dues, or to make payments into the plan by other means, but many felt that there should be outside help. Far and away the most often "outside help" suggested was that the PGA use the monies it collects from television and tournaments, and that the touring pros should be made to contribute proportionately and heavily to the plan. Quite a few suggested that manufacturers of equipment sold only through pro shops could be assessed for contributions.

Still others felt that this was a job for the individual club, and a few outspoken individuals felt that they should do it all themselves.

Sample comments on what the PGA could do to establish a pension plan for the golf professional follow:

- "Install a plan making the clubs pay 75%, the pros 12.5% and the PGA 12.5% of the desired benefits."

- "Consider a type of membership for pros who are in the golf business—i.e., golf range pros, limited summertime pros—but do not have the qualifications for PGA 'Class A' membership because their major income can't come from golf."

- "The PGA is strictly a touring pro type of organization. Very little is done or considered for the club pro."

- "Engage a law firm in Washington, D. C. to effect legislation in Congress. Many club pros work 80-90 hours per week, and with the present high U. S., state and local taxes cannot put enough away for retirement. This is one reason they are forced to work until they are very old. Clubs don't seem to care, or dodge the question as a whole."

- "Invest in our own golf courses throughout the entire U. S., especially in areas that would have long seasons. We are the professionals in the sport and..."
PERSONAL DATA (cont'd.)

6 years ago 12.3%
7 or more years ago 9.9%

If you have an assistant, has he attended the PGA Schools?
Yes 40.3% No 59.7%

If so, when did he attend the Schools?
This year 27.0%
1 year ago 29.1%
2 years ago 27.0%
3 years ago 9.0%
4 years ago 3.4%
5 years ago 3.4%
6 or more years ago 1.1%

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Are you responsible for duties other than your regular duties as a pro?
Yes 62.3% No 37.7%

Are you responsible for maintenance of the course?
Yes 36.9% No 63.1%

To whom do you report?*
President 18.9%
Owner 15.3%
Board Chairman 32.9%
Manager 13.3%
Executive Committee 11.2%
Mayor of City 2.4%
Superintendent of Parks 3.2%
Secretary-Treasurer .8%
Greens Committee 1.2%
Board of Directors 2.0%
Golf Committee .4%

What club meetings do you attend?*
Golf 22.4%
Tournament 14.7%
Rules 1.7%
Handicap 4.3%
Greens 10.3%
Board of Directors 15.5%
ALL 29.3%
NONE 17.7%
Publicity 1.3%
Social and Hospitality 4.3%

*Multiple answers, do not add up to 100.

Comments on contracts

Contracts present a real enigma to many pros, although most who answered this question stated that they feel a contract is desirable. The answers would seem to indicate that younger pros, who are entering the field under new or changing conditions want contracts, while the older “entrepreneurs” prefer to “let things ride” as they have for years.

Job security was the reason most often cited by those favoring contracts. It was also pointed out that a contract outlines the responsibilities of both pro and club—each knows where he stands at all times. The fact that many clubs elect new officers each year and that they do not feel bound by or have no proof of previous verbal understandings was often cited as back-up argument for contracts. Also, the pro’s risk in having to dispose of his merchandise if he were summarily dismissed.

Sample pros and cons on contracts:

“Yes. It gives me a certain amount of security. Am able to purchase merchandise in ample quantities rather than just short two-week supplies.”

“Yes. When I came here the club was drowning (no carts, no play, and no course, even). I have built a fine course; have built a pro shop; have carts and a nice bar business, including slot machines. They are being taken away.”

“No. If not wanted, why stay; if unhappy, why stay?”

“No. A fellow has to think twice—first to be able to move into a new opening, if offered; then at the same time he must work hard to warrant keeping his job.”

“Yes. Because of investment in pro shop merchandise and the seasonal aspects of job openings.”

“Yes. Verbal agreements made with snow on the ground tend to look different from both sides involved as the grass starts growing.”

“Yes. Because it spells out the obligations and responsibilities of each of the parties concerned, and I believe serves to promote a better understanding between the professional and the Board of Directors. It would be nice if the
If you have a written contract, what is the length of contract time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 1 year</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 7 years</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifetime</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you feel that a contract is desirable?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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(See accompanying comments.)

Should the PGA do more?

A key question in the survey asked professionals what, if anything, the PGA should be doing to help further the interests of the club professional, which it is not now doing.

Most felt that the framework of the Association should be strengthened—along the lines of labor unions, if necessary—to aid pros in obtaining better contracts and pension plans. The friction between the working club pro and those “glamor boys” of the tour became evident from the answers, and there were many pleas that touring pros’ endorsements be limited to pro shop lines of golfing equipment.

Other battles in which the working pros felt that the PGA might offer more assistance include the barring of pro lines from shops not owned by PGA pros, and those owned by the clubs; help combat price-cutting and discount houses; help pros keep clubs from taking over the pro shops and golf cars, and a public relations campaign by the PGA to “educate” the public on the value of the home club professional.

Typical answers to this question:

“Just about everything. Junk their red coats and insignia and get down to promoting the PGA member with traveling clinics and advertisements.”

“Withdraw Class-A rating from pros who take jobs without full concessions.”

Continued on page 88