In the last few years we have mentioned or have heard others mention that the golf professional “wears many hats.” He is a teacher, a public relations expert and businessman, if he performs in the professional manner expected of him. The successful professional realizes that these are the standards to which he must adhere. But throughout all of our discussions on the role of the golf professional, we usually discuss only one guy—that guy who works specifically as a golf professional. Very little, if any, attention is focused on the “pilings” of the golf business. Webster defines pilings as those supports which provide the base for a solid foundation. In our definition of pilings, we include those men who work as a combination golf professional, superintendent and manager. These are the men who fight all the problems daily, year after year.

He wears three hats—professional, manager and superintendent—and often it is difficult to balance them. He plays an important role, yet is virtually unrecognized by the industry.

by PATRICK D. WILLIAMS

It goes without saying that the view of the public is askew as far as the profession of golf is concerned. With the exception of numerous club officials who work with the business quite closely, the profession is ranked as follows: 1) tournament players; 2) very successful club professionals; 3) successful club professionals; 4) club professionals; 5) assistant professionals; and 6) the unsung heroes. This type of thinking is natural and is a product of the manner we use in deciding what goes in the limelight. What we need to do, sometimes, is put a little of the limelight on some of the areas that are always in the dark.

We are not inferring that those men listed above the unsung heroes are unimportant. They have earned the accolades they have received. It is a simple proposition related to objectives. To accomplish any objective requires the same amount of time and effort if we view everything on a relative basis. Simply stated, the unsung heroes warrant more attention than they have received.

The Professional Golfers’ Assn. of America is continually striving to define, strengthen and structure its membership classification. It must change because the golf business is dynamic, and change is mandatory. The role played by the golf professional 20 to 30 years ago

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This is what makes our new Super Sox Super.

It's our great fat fluffy pom poms that are going to give your sales a big fat boost.

Wait till your customers see that Super Sox are made of 100% Creslan® acrylic fiber. So they can wash them all they want without worrying about shrinking, stretching or fading those bright bouncy colors. And they are available in 17 different color combinations. Super Sox. They make sense. And sales.

*exclusive of ornamentation

SUPER SOX
SUPER-POM
KNIT CLUB SOX
Reliable of Milwaukee
233 E. Chicago Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

TRIO

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Does not fit today. Whether we like it or not, this role has been greatly expanded by the growth of the golf business. Likewise, this growth has created the need for the unsung heroes' category which we have been discussing. Because golf has long since been removed from the ranks of the wealthy and elite, the unsung heroes become increasingly more important. Without them golf would not be what it is today.

From Garner, N.C., to Chickasha, Okla., to Red Hole, Calif., these are the professionals that bring golf to the masses.

Without them we would not have the other 7,500 golf courses dotting the countryside—we would have only the 2,500 plus affluent-type golf operations.

Some people will argue that these men are not in fact golf professionals, golf course superintendents or club managers. Some consider them to be hybrids, who have limited expertise in each of the three functional areas. I consider them as representing many of the vertebra that make up the backbone of golf.

Now where do these guys fit in? You can find them in big towns and little towns. But invariably one finds them in situations in which the circumstances permit only one guy to do all of the work. Naturally, a man working under these conditions does not have the time at his disposal to become highly pro-

DUNLOP REDUCES GOLF BALL PRICE

Dunlop Tire and Rubber Corp. reduced the professional price of Maxfli golf balls 25 cents a dozen, effective March 15.

According to Paul MacDonald, vice president, Dunlop Sports Div., the price change reflects cost reductions achieved from increases in sales volume and improved manufacturing techniques, plus a modernized distribution system. "In addition," MacDonald says, "Dunlop's action is consistent with the objectives of the Federal government's Phase II Program."

In line with normal Dunlop policy, price protection for professionals is in force for 30 days prior to March 15.
icient in each of the thrce functio-

nal areas of the golf business. He has
to do the best he can or his golfers
are not going to be able to par-
cipate in the game, period. The
game is built on the interest of the
masses, and not just the luster of a
select few.

A case in point. The unsung hero
I have selected as an example is
Tony Doudican, the “golf profes-
sional” at Seminole Municipal GC,
Seminole, Okla., population 8,500.
The words golf professional were
put in quotes because in the eyes of
some, Doudican is not a golf pro-
fessional officially until he is a
member of the PGA. But rest as-
sured that in the eyes of Tony’s boss,
Don Bown, Seminole’s city man-
ger, he is one of the best in the
country. And if you lunch with the
park board, which is made up of
Hulett Edgmon, Jim Austin, Jim
Myers, Jimmy Lynn Austin and Jim
Whitt, there’s no question in any-
body’s mind that Doudican is Mr.
Golf in Seminole. And if you are a
big city golfer don’t think, “Big
deal, what’s Seminole, Oklahoma.”
Think about the thousands of small
cities through the country that have
similar situations. To be redundant,
think about that backbone of golf.

Prior to the Doudican Days of
golf in Seminole, one could easily as-
sume that golf for that city opera-
tion was not too profitable or like-
wise very enjoyable to the players.
They had a need and they filled it.
Golf is now booming in Seminole.

Doudican’s qualifications for be-
coming a golf professional were
similar to those of most men who
want to become professionals. He
loved the game, played it decently
and had a desire to become a part
of it. Obviously, he knew very lit-
tle about being a professional,
much less that of maintaining a
golf course or managing the entire
facility. He did have a consider-
able amount of expertise in men’s
wear merchandising—a plus for
him with respect to the golf shop
merchandising program. And
Seminole, like many golf opera-
tions, could not afford the freight
for a separate professional, super-
intendent and manager. The city
realized it was taking a gamble;
however, they are the type of peo-
ple who look for desire first and

knowledge second. So 34 months
ago, they hired Tony Doudican.

I asked Tony about his excite-
ment when he knew he was in the
golf business. He said that it was
great until he realized that at 5
a.m. the next morning he had to go
out and mow nine greens and tees.
The fact that he had never mowed a
tee or green before would put fear
into the bravest soul.

It is not necessary to go through
all the trials and tribulations, the
good times and the bad that this un-
sung hero has been through. Com-
mon sense implies all sorts of head-
aches associated with inexperi-
ence, limited budgets, less activity
or whatever. The point here is that
by hook or crook things are turning
out the way they should at the
Seminole Municipal GC. A few
facts that substantiate this point:

□ About 18,000 rounds were played
at the course in 1968. In 1971,
40,000 rounds were played;
□ The income to the city from the
operation has more than doubled;
□ The city just approved a bond is-
sue to build a new clubhouse.
□ Design drawings are being pre-
pared to expand the course to 18
holes in the very near future.

Tony Doudican does not openly
take any credit for this progress.
Even though everyone is aware that
he deserves a great deal of the
credit, there is still a need for co-
operation from everybody. Should
we say we need a lot of people sup-
porting golf regardless of whom or
where they may be? So our case il-
ustrates that a basic desire by a lot
of people can make golf successful
under any circumstances.

It is interesting how Doudican
became at least somewhat knowl-
dgeable about his business. He is
the first to admit that he now knows
only 10 per cent to 15 per cent of
what he needs to know. He has
acquired his knowledge through day
to day experience, coupled with a
lot of late night studying of every
book, article or whatever that has
been written on the facets of his
golf business.

After several lengthy discussions,
the real reason for the success at-
tained at the Seminole Municipal
GC became readily apparent. We
have mentioned that everyone had
the desire and interest. Couple this

with Doudican’s philosophy on
golf course operations and you
have it made. His philosophy: “I think
that the people who play golf at our
course deserve the same things, re-
latively, that the people get at the
large prosperous country clubs.
This includes a well-stocked clean
and modern golf shop, a course that
is well-maintained as physically
possible and a staff who are inter-
ested in providing a real service to
their customers.”

The few complaints that Doudi-
can had are the same I have heard
from many unsung heroes. None of
the professional organizations have
programs that are geared, even in a
small way, to the professional who
is also the superintendent and the
manager. Then there is the tendency
of manufacturers’ and suppliers’ sales-
men to overlook all these little guys
or to handle their business by mail or
telephone with little to no personal
contact or service. And as Doudican
so aptly put it, “We don’t want
them to help us because they feel sorry
for us, we want them to help us be-
cause we really need it. You never
can tell, someday we might become
successful.”

We adjourned the interview by my
asking how he keeps up with every-
thing that is going on and needs do-
ing. He said that he thought at first
he was smart enough to keep it all in
his head. Now he walks around with
a tape recorder on his belt and it
keeps track of where he has been and
what he needs to do.

So to sum up, this is one example
of hundreds of men like Tony
Doudican throughout the golf
world. If we measure success in
terms other than dollars they are
right up there with the most suc-
cessful. I have an opinion about
how real their contribution is to
golf. If you have never given them
too much thought, take a few
minutes and formulate your own
opinion.

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