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# HERB GRAFFIS

## SWINGING AROUND GOLF

**Golf proud** of Nicklaus and Miller — two men with class: For years, men, women and children who deeply feel the true spirit of golf have not had the pride that thrilled them when Jack Nicklaus and Johnny Miller promptly and flatly turned down a Las Vegas offer to meet head-on in a million dollar match.

For much too long sport has been cheapening and lowering itself by making other values inferior to that of cash. The prostitution of sport is close to the bottom. Respect is falling and professional golf is not immune. Money is getting to

**‘... prostitution of sport is close to the bottom. Respect is falling and professional golf is not immune ...’**

be the measure of the man. With about eight percent of the population unable to get work, how long do professional athletes think they can be favored?

Each day Jack Nicklaus and Johnny Miller are growing greater in the eyes of intelligent Americans. Nicklaus and Miller showed genuine class again at the right time. They are quality sportsmen and always have been. All golfers can be happy because of the class they have displayed. There is no substitute for class. Class will continue to shine when the Internal Revenue Service has taken from the athletes, managers, lawyers, team owners, promoters and television agents what they took in lieu of a high reputation for sport.

**Japan's golf** awaiting second wind: Japan's golf boom — which came to a screeching halt some time ago — is beginning to draw its second breath, Americans who have recently looked closely say. That country's 500 golf ranges continue to be busy but there has been a collapse in membership brokerage which accounted for sales of mem-

berships in new or proposed new clubs at prices from \$2,500 to \$25,000. When the recession hit Japan, plans for 235 new clubs were abandoned. Japan now has 700 courses and that should be enough to care for its golfers for awhile. While dependable figures on Japanese golf are not readily available, some have said there are nine million golfers.

**Florida PGA** proposes state licensing of pros: At the request of some Florida section PGA members, the Florida legislature is considering a bill licensing golf professionals. The proposal, still in the talk stage at present, is the first golf professional licensing suggestion to get any attention from state lawmakers.

Not all Florida PGA members believe licensing is the right answer to problems that are a costly to the state's amateur and professional golfers. The Florida PGA has established and maintains a high standard of membership but is plagued by incompetents brought into a pseudo-pro rating by the hiring practices of some employers. These employers don't know golf business and hire glib and irresponsible men who will work cheap. The results include bad management of golf operations, poor instruction, not to mention the victimization of the golfing public and qualified professionals by poor marketing that takes place.

Florida has 623 courses of which 487 are 18-hole facilities. It has been an especially effective PGA section which conducts collective affairs of a high-grade membership very well. But the section has not had the desired success in educating some of the state's employers on how to hire the pro that would be best for the club and its members. Certification of capable professionals has not scored as well as an employment asset as the CMAA and GCSAA have done with formal endorsements.

*continued*

## GRAFFIS *continued*

**Women's lib** shows in new green committees: There is a noticeable trend in appointing women to green committees — especially in the western states. The USGA perhaps had a forecast feeling of the trend when they presented Mrs. Fanny Fern Davis its 1975 Green Section award.

Appointment of women to green committees is due to increased play of women and girls at clubs. It is also possibly a somewhat desperate effort of club officers to promote efficiency and results in course management by persistent campaigning on good housekeeping. Maybe the increasing influence of women in private club operations is explained by a veteran superintendent who recently told me:

"Women lately have been getting around in their competitions to more clubs than most men members visit. The women observe and are not hesitant about expressing their opinions. My wife and daughters tell me the prestige of a club too often is lowered by bad housekeeping in women's lockerrooms and

golf courses. The visiting women spread the catty but perhaps accurate gossip."

**Two artists join forces:** Toney Penna has joined Bob Simmons in one of those player consultant-golf course architect combinations. Considering Toney's background, I would guess he has played as many different courses and with as many different classes of players as anybody else in American golf. He was assistant to Alex Smith and Tommy Armour when he was a lad. He was busy on good pro jobs of his own. He played many tournaments and did well in them when he was a salesman, talent scout and club designer for MacGregor for more than 20 years. He is now heading his own club-making company and continues to tutor, learn and get around.

Bob Simmons was a pro and superintendent who determined to be a golf course designer and builder. He went to work for the noted architect — the late Dick Wilson — as a construction foreman. When Dick died, Bob went out on his own, and he has done some exciting small

town courses that have been subjects of many big town discussions.

So how do two talented fellows form a good golf architect unity? Wait and see.

The Big Name Pro-Experienced Architect teams that have been formed in recent years have seldom achieved the results of which they are theoretically capable. The strong players dominated the design so there seem to be too many holes that are too long. The man who is designing for the broad range of players rather than for the long-hitting one percent has got to have a wide and exciting scope of strategy in his design. Maybe that is why truly great courses such as Oakmont and Augusta National have been designed by amateurs with suggestions from professional players accounting for finishing touches. Golf architectural business has been picking up lately. Considerable revision of courses is being planned to make holes more interesting to more members. It surely does not make a hole more interesting to make it longer. □

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