

# The old pro

## Sees himself as golf's wasted wealth

Far too much of my time with the good clubs I served was wasted because I could not make use of my experience. Like most other golf professionals, I was a captive of the shop. I had to be or go broke. At the majority of clubs, pro shop operation means the pro must invest \$20,000 or more stocking the shop with apparel and equipment and accessories provided conveniently to a limited market, generally for less than a full year.

A pro will hear members, including those who don't spend \$25 a year in the shop, complain that the pro makes \$25,000 a year in his job. Usually, if the pro would charge a fair salary for himself against his cost of doing business, the bottom line would show that he makes much less out of his job than the club pays its chef.

I don't know what is wrong with the way golf business is run by the club officials who are better businessmen than I. Another mystery is that I wouldn't trade my job for any other work in this world. My job is the damndest combination of a religion, love affair, school teaching in living and public service of any job I've heard of.

Rarely was I or another club professional allowed to give the valuable help to our members and their club that golf professionals as business specialists alone are qualified to provide.

Our course superintendent was an able hardworking man and — although handicapped by budget, weather, unqualified green committee members, and defects in course construction — was doing fairly well.

If we had had the time to play nine holes together once a week, I know the course would have been made more pleasant for members. Money could have been saved. The superintendent probably could have given me ideas for helping the club and myself. And this extension of our potential values could easily have been accomplished by playing together so we could work closely together.

Many times a week I looked out of the shop and saw at the first tee a man or a woman with a swing error I could have eliminated by playing with him or going along with him for two or three holes and showing him how to teach himself to do the right thing. For a few minutes of my time and knowledge that man's (or woman's) play would be better and golf would be enjoyed more the rest of a lifetime in the game.

But I could not do what I alone of the club's employees was competent to do.

I, like too many other club professionals, was an occupational shut-in. I was to a considerable extent the victim of a traditional program that makes golf generally a badly run business.

My employers are mainly the victims of a waste nobody in golf has tried to eliminate: the failure to intelligently utilize the professional.

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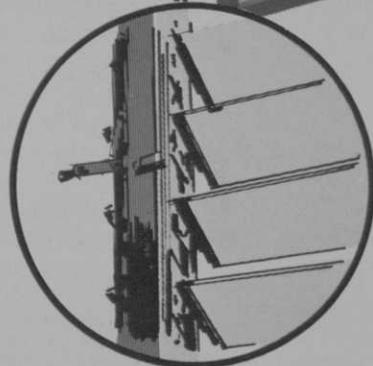
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