

# The old pro

## Says golfers don't know their tools

Golfers today have better tools than ever before in golf's history.

And the sad truth is that very few golfers know the "why" and the "how" of the use of their clubs.

A golf professional who sells clubs had better make sure that his buyer knows as much about the reasons for the construction details of the clubs as golfers did when pros were making hickory-shafted clubs to fit the hands, arms, body, legs, size, weight, temperament, and type of swing of the buyer and even the course he called his own.

I was promoted into the shop's club-making bench from my caddie job because clubmaking fascinated me. Countless hours I spent working on shafts, clubheads, and grips for some man or woman who was an individual I saw play and who wasn't merely the end of a production line.

Clubmaking to me was an art and a science and no more merely a trade than painting a masterpiece for an Italian palace would be a trade.

The pros I worked for were art critics, master workmen themselves, and educators. They taught the club buyers why the clubheads, shafts, and grips were made as they were for the more effective and reliable use of the one in the whole world for whom the clubs were made.

Thus golfers were taught how to use their tools for the purpose for which they were designed.

I hear and read about pros complaining that club members too often buy from stores. Then I see at some clubs and a public course now and then what they buy. It pains me to see stocky, short people using clubs that are upright with weights and shafts that fight them. Those clubs are bought at a cheap price, but the golfer will continue to pay with bad shots for years.

I can't blame the store for trimming the poor bargain-hunting suckers. I think the pros are also guilty, probably, of not knowing enough about club ordering and fitting to protect and educate the unsuspecting golfer.

I wonder how much some pros know about getting the picture of the performance of the leading edge of the club into the user's mind. I wonder how much competent testing and observing was done on the practice tee before the player was fitted correctly. I wonder how much the pro, as the trusted authority, really knew about the flex, weight, and helpfulness of the kind of steel, graphite, or aluminum shafts which might serve the player — why and how.

I recall how one manufacturer got a reputation for "stronger" irons simply by giving lofted clubs higher numbers. I wonder if the pro who fits clubs knows that some manufacturers are now putting more loft into woods and caring for the players who had difficulty in getting the ball airborne.

I shouldn't say it out loud but I think maybe even assistants in the shop used to fit clubs more usefully and taught the user how to understand the tools.



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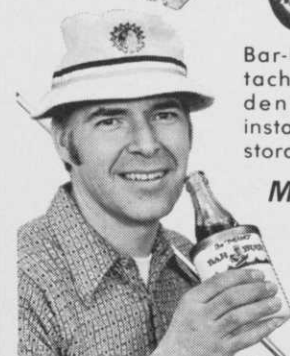
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