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# Lester Electrical

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## The old pro

### Club officials can learn from ranges

Many pros have gone home from their clubs where only a dozen to 20 people are to have dinner in the clubhouse and passed golf driving ranges that are packed. The ranges are making money and the clubs are losing a lot of money and attractiveness to members.

There are plenty of elements to this contrast between well-managed ranges and private clubs that club officials and pros ought to be discussing. The factors narrow down to people being eager to learn better golf.

That is the simple point I don't hear being mentioned as clubs' professionals are talking about slumps in business and amateur association and club officials are worrying about the darkening future for private clubs with costs rising to shut out desirable young people.

The club officials and pros now seem to have lost sight of the fact that their business is in trouble because of what a PGA survey showed about pros' lesson income. When 78 percent of pros earn less than \$2,500 a year from lessons, all golf business has to suffer. If a pro isn't getting more than \$2,500 in lesson revenue a year, is it because he isn't adequately qualified for a teaching job or because his club officials don't know how to direct a first-class club?

In cold informed judgement, I think most of the fault is that of club officials who don't know how to direct club policies and operations to the times in making use of the pro's potential as a golf teacher.

Almost 50 years ago, like most other pros, I was hired because of my teaching interest, ability, and results. My contemporaries and I taught golfers and that accounted for the boom that made golf the national participants game.

Now I have a suspicion that almost as many golfers learn at driving ranges as at private clubs. When golf education is modernized, instruction more effective than today's obsolete half-hour lesson procedure will be given free as part of the value of belonging to a club. Today many club members' children get more golf instruction at colleges than their parents get at the club. I mentioned this to an old friend who was an officer of our club. He said, "If we handled our annual dues and locker rental collection as a business, the interest on that income that surged into us would pay the pro enough to give all his lessons away."

You may not have to go that far in order to fill out your lesson appointment book, but it wouldn't hurt to talk to your club management about making better use of your time.

# golfbusiness

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