



Minikahda's Stately Clubhouse Shows Character of the Club.

# Taylor's Profitable Policies at Famous Club

By HERB GRAFFIS

**T**WENTY-SEVEN years ago Bob Taylor went to Minikahda at Minneapolis as professional of that pioneer course. You could spray a machine gun in almost any direction over the nine holes that comprised the course at that time and endanger no one. Late this fall I dropped in to visit Bob and the club's well known greenkeeper, Charley Erickson. Though the day was gloomy and a cold intermittent rain fell, several foursomes plowed around with enjoyment that in view of the weather conditions was mystifying even to this sympathetic student of the golf bug.

Erickson ante-dated Taylor at the club by one year. Together they have witnessed Minikahda become one of the country's famous courses, and to their team-work and intelligent energy back-stage credit undoubtedly is due for the club's progress. They are wrapped up in their club.

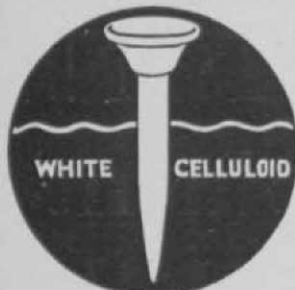
As Taylor and I talked things over in the attractive pro shop, it occurred to me that the newer golf clubs perhaps fail to

appreciate the value of a professional who regards the progress of his club to be as vitally important as his personal advancement. Perhaps, too, some of the younger pros don't put the correct emphasis on this factor. A pro shop is a great place for creating and reflecting club "atmosphere." If the pro is out for himself, first, last and only, nickle and dime snatching for an insignificant job of repair work, you can generally count on it that he's a fellow who changes jobs often. He neglects to exercise foresight and to establish the pro shop as a spot where club spirit shines forth brightly.

## The Happy Medium

These veterans in the pro ranks, like Taylor, are a whole lot more interested in the development of first class young pros than is generally recognized. Partly because their own dearly won and highly prized reputations are at stake, but mostly because they are so earnestly concerned in the continued advance of golf, are these

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old campaigners so intensely ambitious for the younger fellows.

"Though today's conditions are vastly different, the younger man in U. S. professional golf does well to heed the sound conservatism and reasonable reserve typical of the older British and Scotch pro school in this country," stated Taylor. He added that, of course, the status of the pro on the other side and in the United States was not the same, and that, due to national temperaments and policies, the easy democracy of this country and its placing of the pro in a position of prominence and frequent adulation was likely to prove dangerous to the pro whose judgment had not matured.

The public grants to the pro golfer no immunity from its fickleness. If he keeps on the job steadily, if he anticipates and meets satisfactorily the wants of his members, if he consciously avoids the spotlight just to show-off, the better for his security and reputation. Youngsters who attempt to keep pace with the crap-shooting, bridge, and other expensive diversions of their brother pros far too frequently find themselves hopelessly involved financially and thrown aside by the same members who so warmly invited the new pro into their lively whirl. That sage advice, with plenty of examples cited, is Taylor's idea of piloting the younger man safely over the earlier stages of his career.

### Good Buy Is a Good Sale

Taylor's shop is not elaborate, but it is always as neat as the proverbial pin and displays a carefully chosen and comprehensive stock. It is a roomy establishment housed in a building separate from the clubhouse and locker-room. This detachment is not the best line-up in the world for a big volume of pro shop sales since it involves a walk off of the beaten path to the first tee, but that has been more than overcome by Taylor making his shop known to every one of his members as the best place in town to buy golf goods.

His basic idea is that unless a pro buys right he is "sunk" right at the start. "Let my members see a pair of golf hose at some down-town store," Taylor commented, "and they'll pass up what apparently is a tempting bargain at the competing place to come out and buy from me. The reason is that I pick stuff that is handled only by high class stores, of the character that gets my members' other trade, and

I make my selling price right. These high class stores have their own problem. They have high overhead and can't handle anything but quality merchandise. My overhead is much lower and instead of taking a chance of less volume and more profit per sale, I make my prices in line.

"Repeated instances have shown my policy to my members in such a favorable light that I have won their confidence and a firm hold on their trade. The pro who works along these lines is going to build up a volume of business in addition to his club and ball sales that shows a substantial profit. I make it plain, tactfully, that I don't compete on a price basis with cheap stuff in either strictly golf merchandise or in golf apparel. The cheap stuff that is offered at a lower price by department stores is merchandise that has been turned down by me because it would not meet the standards of my members, or is merchandise that the manufacturers did not even submit to me in view of their knowing of my policy of protecting my members.

"At Minikahda there is no price quibbling although the wealthy character of the membership is such that there might ordinarily be. The pro at a wealthy club knows that the richer a member is the more frequently he engages in price questioning, most of the time just to exercise the trading acumen that made him master of a fortune. Because of this freedom from price argument, I am satisfied that the importance of a careful buying policy is demonstrated convincingly at our club."

High-powered selling is something that Taylor thinks dangerous at any good private club. He points out that the member is out at the club primarily to enjoy himself and not to buy. Even the fact that each item of the enjoyment costs and costs plenty, is to be kept very much in the background.

For that reason Taylor is a great believer in making displays both of merchandise and of manufacturers' advertising material do the job of working up the customer to the point where he asks for something, or at least manifests enough interest in a particular item of merchandise so that the shopman can follow through in a manner that will exhibit a desire to serve rather than an eagerness to take the player's money.

This is the sort of plain common sense that has made Taylor a valued element in his club's attainment of fame.



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