

He Paid His Club by Being Press Agent and Pro, Too

By HERB GRAFFIS

ONE of the ablest pros I know is a contradictory sort of a fellow. For his club he is a marvel as a publicity getter but to get him to tell how he does it so his own name can be mentioned is out of the question.

Every club this man has been connected with has been a successful club. Although their number is not many—he's no gypsy—they have arisen to high standing in their respective districts during his tenure of office. With golf getting more and more space in the sport section each year it's up to the pro to know something about getting publicity for his club. Forget about personal publicity. The pro who is trying to "crash the gate" with some newspaper copy about himself is a joke to the sports writers. He rules himself out by his eagerness. But the fellow with some interesting news of general interest gets himself flocks and flocks of welcome publicity through the family entrance, so to speak, when he boosts his club first, last and all the time.

This particular fellow I'm talking about was hired by a new club in a mid-west metropolis as its pro. The organizers had started full of pep and high-purposes, per the usual. Then came the inevitable point when the rate of increase of memberships lagged. The chairman of the membership committee was telling this pro about the situation. This pro was a business man and a student of the trick ways in which human nature works. The club had been long enough at a standstill to begin to threaten running down at the heel. This pro counseled, "Send the word out that the membership is filled. Don't let the boys try to high-pressure any membership prospects. There's no more place for high-pressure selling in the membership campaign than there is in the pro shop. Give me a few weeks and we'll see if we can't get them eager to join. Make your salutation now, 'it's too bad you didn't get in.'"

This happened about eight years ago. Adjoining the club was a narrow strip of land that was available at a bargain. The club picked it up. The pro immediately

called up the sports editors in his city and told them that the club had picked up a piece of ground as an airplane landing field. Remember, this was novelty copy then. The papers picked up the yarn and gave it plenty of prominent space.

Just to show you how heaven watches over the gent who takes a chance, the next day after the story broke in the papers, an aviator did land on the newly acquired ground. That was good for another story. The flier happened to be one of those who would take up passengers for a short flight. He did a land office business for some time, but the club finally had to get him off the lot. His plane made too much noise.

Picks the Celebrities

Another favorite publicity stunt was inviting famous visitors to the city to play at the course. Actors proved particularly happy to get these invitations and they, of course, always get newspaper space. That's what their shows have good press-agents for. The presence of these prominent people at the club began to give the club a more than local prestige as the favorite golfing spot for the interesting people. Memberships began to come in voluntarily at a lively pace. The plan was working.

This smart pro was especially careful not to loud-pedal his personal connection with the activities that made news. He mentioned that merely as a matter of course, but he didn't fail to put his deft foot well forward. His association with newspaper men, in a really helpful fashion to them, got them anxious to do him a good turn. He got columns of publicity that mystified other pros in the district. "This guy has to break his neck to shoot par once a year, still he gets all the publicity," they commented. They hadn't awakened to the fact that scoring alone wasn't the sign of a pro who was doing his club and himself the most good. And it isn't, as you will realize when you consider the cases of many of the pros you know who are recognized as successful business men.