

Pro Prospects Are Viewed

By WILLIE HUNTER

Professional, Montebello Park Golf Club

PROFESSIONAL golfers, and by reference to professional golfers I mean those who have been accepted as such by the Professional Golfers' Association of America, have made far greater strides towards general efficiency during 1928

than in all their previous existence. This has come about mainly through the efforts of local bodies who have set up for themselves standards and ideals which do them credit. I feel that it will be through the local bodies of the P. G. A. that action

NOVEMBER 19, in Cleveland, the annual meeting of the Professional Golfers' Association of America will be held.

Before the first issue of GOLFDOM was printed we had some knowledge of the organization hopes and efforts of P. G. A. officials. The deeper we got into our work of trying to be of plainly profitable service to the properly representative professionals of the country the stronger became our belief that the organization aspirations of the P. G. A. leaders and the rank and file were stymied by lack of facilities and full-time, qualified personnel. It is unjust to ask any professional to volunteer to assume, without pay, the burden of the work that clearly lies ahead. The load, heaven knows, has been heavy enough for the trail-blazers. It has been willingly and ably borne and we doubt if credit and co-operation have been as freely granted as they might have been.

In view of the foregoing, GOLFDOM cut loose in September with an article on the P. G. A. "Hour of Destiny," intending to arouse pro thought so the situation would have the benefit of due consideration when the boys met at Cleveland to talk it over. Comment of Alex Pirie, George Sargent and others on this P. G. A. article was printed in October GOLFDOM. In some respects, they pointed out, we were wrong; for the greater part they endorsed GOLFDOM'S remarks.

Now comes Willie Hunter with brisk and specific ideas. They call for the thoughtful attention of every professional who believes in his business and in his own ability and character. They make tangible, constructive suggestions.

It is this sort of definite thinking that will bring great good when the P. G. A. holds its annual meeting. In wishing the P. G. A. a highly successful conference, we need do no more than to hope that each delegate comes into the sessions ready to talk in accurate, concise and complete detail of well-considered and definitely helpful ideas.

Most association meetings, no matter what lines of commercial endeavor they concern, kill nine-tenths of the time in platitudes, generalities and common "bull." In deliberately protecting themselves against that danger the professionals will distinguish themselves as business men.

will come to effect centralization of effort so that close contact will be maintained between all branches.

Despite our progress it is useless to argue that we are all we could be as an organization, in the way we are at present constituted. September "GOLFDOM" had an article entitled "The P. G. A. Hour of Destiny is Here," which it would be well for all in our profession to ponder over.

This article was not written in the spirit of fault finding, but rather as a constructive criticism. Those of us who might criticize the directors of the P. G. A. would do well to analyze the accomplishments of the P. G. A. during the last few years taking into consideration the machinery, or perhaps I should say, the want of machinery at their command.

Pioneers Have Paved Way

Men like Pirie and his associate directors have been invaluable as pioneers of the P. G. A. movement giving unselfishly of their time in an effort to better our conditions, but the time has come when a real organization must be formed if we would hold up our end as a worth-while profession.

It should not be hard to finance a real structure to guide and co-ordinate our efforts so that all branches in this vast country are kept in close contact. There are many ways that suggest themselves to raise the necessary funds to do this but the only straightforward method is by a substantial increase of the annual dues. These dues could be collected and forwarded to the central office on the installment plan so that those of our members who are not in the "big money class" can more easily meet the obligation.

It is usual when asking for more money to give more in return and we would be foolish to subscribe to a movement for increased dues unless we intended to go about forming a Central Business Office run by men preferably outside our ranks. At present the P. G. A. can not do much of consequence except receive dues and run a P. G. A. championship. What we want and want quickly is a man big enough to take care of our affairs and make possible a continuous method of approach to the governing body. A golf professional has not a chance in the world to confer on anything like equal terms with the U. S. G. A. He is bound to feel that he is talking more or less indirectly to his boss. Give us a man after the type of



Willie Hunter, former amateur star, who makes study of needs of pros in business careers

Landis and I am ready to bet the rank and file of the P. G. A. will pay for him.

Very little organized effort has been made by our association to combat the pernicious activities of the hundreds of self-styled golf professionals who prey upon the public. These people are the cause of our profession being credited with numerous black marks. The only way that I can see to halt their activities would be by a well organized advertising campaign in the golf magazines. Paid publicity would be followed by favorable free copy and the public would for the first time have fearless and definite information regarding those who teach and advise them.

Need U. S. G. A. Team-Work

The U. S. G. A. should be approached by the right person and interested in concerted national action against the inefficient non-recognized professional. Their recommendations to their affiliated member clubs would be beneficial both to the public and to our profession.

Make no mistake the golf professionals are awakening from their slumber. Business methods are being introduced into their shops so as to compete with the modern competition of stores.

Their greatest fault, poor buying, is being taken care of through the interest and advice of the local executives of the P. G. A. Old-time policies of waiting until the business comes to you are gone forever and in their place is a recognition of the fact

that the golfing public has changed and requires to be sold before buying. Credit in Southern California is now the business of the association. The wholesale houses furnish us with a list of delinquent accounts and the professional whose name appears thereon is answerable to his fellow members. We have found that a warning has been sufficient to straighten out most such situations.

Contrary to the oft spoken criticisms of our profession, we can safely say that golf professionals are assimilating business methods with a willingness which speaks well for their future in the stern competition ahead.

Assistant Is Important in Pro Success

By PAUL SCOTT

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IN going around to different clubs either to play or on business I have spent a few minutes in each golf shop, looking over the professional's supply of golf equipment and at the system of taking care of the members' clubs and of selling golf goods and assigning caddies to players. And it has struck me that in many clubs the efficiency of the professionals' assistants could be improved upon for the welfare of both the professional and the club in general.

Almost every day the professional is busy giving lessons on the practice tee or is giving a playing lesson or is playing a game of golf with his club members. And while he is away from his golf shop he should have an assistant who will look after the interests of the members and their guests just as well as the pro would if he were in the golf shop.

At many clubs the assistants do not keep the members' clubs cleaned properly. They may clean the clubs after the player uses them but if he should not come out for a week or two the clubs get dusty and probably rusty and should be cleaned again. In many cases the player comes out to play golf and as he starts off of the first tee he notices his bag and also the clubs are dirty. The professional receives a revenue for the care of these clubs and I think he should have an efficient assistant to this detail of the shop's operations.

Lax in Selling

Another place where there is a great deal



Chisholm Photo

PAUL SCOTT
Professional at Montecito

of laxity is in the selling and taking care of the golf supplies by the assistants. In many cases the assistant does not keep his stock clean and attractive and in selling a member anything does not care whether the member buys anything or not. In many instances the assistants are hitting golf balls down the first fairway in front of the golf shop and when a member or guest comes to play golf he has to wait until the assistant gets through practicing before he gets any service, and when he does it is given without thought so that he can hurry out and hit more balls.

There are a great many professionals who think that as long as they can shoot a wonderful game of golf that they can hold down the job with their clubs or, as they are good instructors and are busy giving lessons all the time their job is safe. But I don't think any professional's job is safe unless he sees that there is efficiency in every way in the golf shop and caddie system as well as his teaching and playing.

There was some discussion in a recent issue of GOLFDOM about certain clubs taking away part or all of the concessions from certain professionals. I can see justification for the cancellation of a pros' logical privilege when the professional allows poor efficiency to exist in his shop.

I think that a professional's duty is to his club members first. He should see that they are taken care of in the best possible way so that they will enjoy their golf and