

# Why Hide Pro Light Under Bushel?

By *GEORGE SARGENT*

I HAVE read with a good deal of interest the article in the September issue of *GOLFDOM* entitled, "The P. G. A. Hour of Destiny Is Here."

Headlines of this nature are, to say the least, somewhat of the startling order; but having known the publishers of *GOLFDOM* for a number of years, and having been an interested reader of *GOLFDOM* since its inauguration, I feel sure that our profession will at least receive fair treatment in its pages; and that in all probability this particular article was, at least from the editor's standpoint, meant for the best interest and intentions towards our profession. After reading the article under discussion, we must bear in mind the fact that neither the Professional Golfers' Association or the golf professionals individually have ever been advertisers or particular boosters of their own profession; but rather they have kept their own light under a bushel and have subconsciously taken the stand that actions speak louder than words; this alone has made the golf professional, and the golf profession very much misunderstood.

The P. G. A. "Hour of Destiny" article has put the profession into a position where it must defend itself; this might be done by using war or boxing methods; where the best method of defense is to attack the other fellow; or we can marshal our facts together and present our own point of view to the public. Personally I believe the time is ripe when the golf profession should abandon its policy of hiding its light under a bushel; and to prepare itself to get into the public limelight a little more than we have done in the past. I do not believe our profession has suffered or been held back in any way by its policy in the past; in fact I believe it has



George Sargent, pro at Scioto (Columbus, O.), former National Open Champion and a power in pro ranks

given the golfing public of the United States a feeling of respect and pride in its representatives of the golf profession.

## P. G. A. Is On the Job.

In giving the ideas or recommendations in this article I wish it to be thoroughly understood that they are personal ideas and recommendations only, although I am also giving some actual facts to show that the Professional Golfers' Association of America has not been so far behind the time as the "Hour of Destiny" article would have us believe; but rather it has been guided by sound evolution in its progress and has sought to build slowly and thoroughly.

I wish to go back first of all to the little pioneer band of golf professionals, who left their native Scotch heaths and English downs to come to this country, which was then a golfing wilderness, to sow the first seeds of what is now the greatest golfing territory on our earth. These men have been called everything but Christians: they are supposed to have lowered the dignity of our profession, dragged the name of golf profession in the mud and otherwise so badly abused it that we are still more or less suffering from the shock and degradation of their doings. Unfortunately they never came to their own defense; so the golfing public believed anything and everything that was ever said or written of the golf professional. Thirty years ago there were very few golf courses, or golfers in the United States. Today the United States leads the world both in golf courses and in golf players; thus in less than thirty years this country has risen from the very bottom of the list to the topmost rung of the ladder. Who built the foundation to this wonderful success and was responsible for sowing the first seeds of knowledge

that were to raise, amongst hosts of others, such golfers as Travis, Travers, Ouimet, Evans, Von Elm, Bobby Jones, MacNamara, McDermott, Brady and Hagen whatever their individual failings may have been? That pioneer band deserves and should have the credit of laying the foundation and doing most of the missionary work that has made this country the foremost leader in the golfing world both in players and courses.

### What P. G. A. Faced.

From the year 1900 to 1916 the golf profession apart from one or two attempts to organize, was largely an individual affair. Each professional was striving to the best of his ability to boost and teach the game and to further its interests as much as possible. In 1916 the Professional Golfers' Association of America came into being. With a territory that was bounded by the Atlantic and Pacific oceans on the east and west, with Canada and Mexico on the north and south, the originators of the P. G. A. were confronted with the next to impossible proposition of banding together a few hundred golf professionals who were scattered over millions of square miles.

In spite of this situation much good was accomplished from both the standpoint of the profession and golf interests in general. They first organized a match play championship. Before the days of gate fees, Mr. Rodman Wanamaker very generously financed the championship each year, donating some \$3,000, and valuable medals; also donating a very fine challenge cup. Upon the advent of gate admissions in 1922 it was mutually agreed by Mr. Wanamaker and the P. G. A. of America that in view of gate admissions it was possible for the association to finance its own championship. So successful has been the tournament in recent years that it has now assumed a position of one of the three national championships of the United States. More than \$10,000 is given in prize money each year for this event.

### Gave U. S. Standing.

Prior to 1921 international golf from the standpoint of this country was at a very low ebb. The British had been able to walk off with our championships whenever they felt like it. So discouraging had the situation become that it was decided as a method of defense by the P. G. A. of America in conjunction with Golf Illustrated magazine to solicit funds to send over

a team of professionals to compete in the British championship. Twelve of our leading professionals were selected and sent over in 1921 with the happy result of Jock Hutchinson bringing, for the first time, the British Open championship title to this country. Since then, with the help of Walter Hagen, Jim Barnes and Bobby Jones, it has made practically an annual pilgrimage to the United States.

The National Open championship of the United States is now undoubtedly the largest tournament in the world. Twenty years ago sixty or seventy players was a full size entry; this year some eleven hundred entered. The P. G. A. not only foresaw but predicted this tremendous growth, and was able to outline a program to take care of this large entry which was accepted and is being used by the United States Golf Association very successfully.

The P. G. A. in suggesting this program is saving the golf professional tens of thousands of dollars in travelling expenses and time each year. In recent years the P. G. A. in conjunction with the P. G. A. of Great Britain has inaugurated and placed on a permanent basis an international team match between American and British golf professionals. This is called the Ryder cup team match, and is alternately played for every other year in this country and Great Britain; each country caring for its own expenses.

### P. G. A. Achievements.

The P. G. A. of America I may say has now in the neighborhood of two thousand members and is still very rapidly growing; it owns its own magazine which is published and mailed to all its members each month. There is also a benevolent fund, which, although I am sorry to say its funds are rather limited, has nevertheless played a very important part in the lives of some of our members.

I cite a few of the activities of the P. G. A. not to show that the P. G. A. is all it should be or all that it could be, but simply to show that in the short period of its existence it has done a mighty fine work and is undoubtedly on a very good foundation from which further progress can safely be made.

Getting back to the "Hour of Destiny" article: the advice given, if I read it correctly, is that we should place a suitable man in charge of the P. G. A. affairs: one who understands exactly what we need and could devote his whole time and efforts on behalf of the golf profession. I

absolutely agree and so I believe does every member of the P. G. A., that is what we need and must be our next step. A year ago it was decided by the National executive committee of the P. G. A. to place the matter of raising the dues sufficiently to allow us to hire such a man. This matter is to be definitely settled at the annual National executive committee meeting to be held at Cleveland in November.

### Paddle Own Canoe

The article mentions part of the expense of hiring such a man could be borne by the manufacturers. I believe I am voicing the sentiments of every man of the two thousand members of the P. G. A. when I say we must learn to paddle our own canoe.

### Pro Qualifications

Regarding qualifications of a professional as mentioned in the article, there is already a national ruling in effect that no one can become a member of the P. G. A. unless he has been three years in the profession. This means either three years as assistant under a professional or three years as professional at a club.

There is, and has been, a good deal of talk regarding the professional credit rating. The average loss is I believe about six tenths of one per cent, which is perhaps slightly larger than some lines of business and a good deal less than others. Nevertheless, while I cannot of course speak officially for the P. G. A., I feel sure the executives of the P. G. A. would gladly appoint a committee to confer with a committee of the manufacturers upon this point to see what improvement could be made.

I feel GOLFDOM is generous in opening up its pages for discussion on our profession; it should make the pro realize his responsibilities, bring sharply to his attention that he is a member of one of the most responsible professions in the world, that he is very much in the public limelight and last but not least, there is only one way for our profession to succeed as a whole: *proper organization.*

## P. G. A. Member Says Increase Dues

Editor,  
GOLFDOM,  
Chicago.

Sir:

Your article in last month's issue of GOLFDOM, "P. G. A. Hour of Destiny Is

Here," hit the nail on the head when you said the P. G. A. could use a "Hays" or "Landis."

Having been a member of this organization since it was organized, I realize and appreciate the good work the executive committee have done in the past, with no remuneration for their time, but when they have professional duties to attend they are putting a hardship on themselves.

I have attended several meetings and heard many discussions on this subject, and I, for one, would suggest raising the dues to \$50 a year, and employ a man with marked ability to handle the affairs of this organization, who can visit the different sections and help the officers handle the admission of new members. I have seen, in the past, new members accepted with but slight qualifications. If we had continued to take members just for the dues that they pay, and not character and capabilities, then we wouldn't have gone very far. That day of casual membership standards has passed.

The increase of dues will keep out the so-called pros who are a detriment to this association, also pay the salary of a competent man who could, among other duties, help put the P. G. A. on a very strong financial basis. I am sure that the business pro can well afford this if he wants his profession put on a high standard.

I may state that I read, with intense interest, your magazine, and I want to congratulate you on the good work you are doing, especially from the professional's standpoint.

Sincerely,

W. L.

## Should Tell Clubs Good Pro's Qualities

Editor,  
GOLFDOM,  
Chicago.  
Sir:

Have read, with much interest, your article in the September issue of GOLFDOM on the P. G. A. destiny. You say that the professional golfers are crying for a Moses to help lead them out of the wilderness, which is more than true. It is a complicated situation which opens up many lines of discussion and solutions that lead nowhere. In my opinion, the uncontrolled rapid growth of the game in the last few years has not been good for

(Continued on page 38)