

P. G. A. Hour of Destiny Is Here

So What Will Pros Do About It?

By *HERB GRAFFIS*

PROFESSIONAL golfers are crying for a Moses to lead them out of the wilderness.

Individually, as business men, the representative rank and file of the pro tribe has progressed considerably during the past two years. As a cohesive and powerful organized group, the professionals continue to be the babes in the woods of business. The P. G. A. as it is now running falls short of the demand of the times.

This is not my own exclusive judgment, but it's the verdict I have heard from scores of professionals of prominence, studious temperament and capability, including some P. G. A. officials.

Before we go any further into this matter of presenting suggestions that have been advanced for making the P. G. A. membership "mean something," let's understand perfectly that there are no personalities in this matter. It is to be a calm consideration of the situation with the good of the pros in mind. Personally I have the very highest regard for the P. G. A. national and state officials whom I know; one of the high priests of the bunch is one of the best, straightest shooting friends I have. Consequently these remarks deal with conditions, not with certain men.

P. G. A. Is Stymied

Those who are unduly harsh in their criticism of the limitations of the present activities and achievements of the P. G. A. can be easily silenced by calling attention to the conditions which existed in the pro field prior to the organization of the present national P. G. A. body. There can be no denial of the fact that the P. G. A. has been the major factor responsible for awakening of a group aspiration among the pros, for establishing some ethical standards, and for drawing attention to the demands for business ability in their everyday professional duties. The P. G. A. has been functioning with increasing vigor and results, and each year has

made progress. That is admitted, but it is the consensus of opinion that more definite and co-ordinated work is urgently demanded if the P. G. A. is to become one of the recognized major powers in golf.

In looking for the spot where this new policy must be instituted, we immediately begin to wonder what sort of an executive organization is to be established. The way the situation stands today, an official of the national or divisional P. G. A. is doing nobly to handle the onerous details of his unpaid office. A man's first duty is to his family. In that connection handling his job as pro in the most faithful, intelligent and diligent manner is the right way of making sure that his family is going to get a good income for covering its expenses. When a man has done what a pro job demands he has very little time left for handling the many detailed duties incumbent upon his P. G. A. official work.

Then you must consider the painful truth that the pros are self-taught business men whose business experience has been confined within narrow limits as compared with the experience of men in other commercial fields. That certainly is nothing against the pros, but it is a condition that has great bearing on the situation.

What's The Answer?

The more the above factors are brought to my attention, the more it seems to me that the P. G. A. needs a man of marked ability, resourcefulness and character to serve as the paid executive secretary, or whatever you want to call him, in developing each detail of the P. G. A. opportunity for substantial service to the professionals and to golf in general, and to outline and co-ordinate the work of the various sectional bodies, co-operating to the fullest extent with the officials of these bodies.

The moving picture industry has its Hays, the rubber industry its Andrews, baseball its Landis, and the fur, garment and other industries have their director-

generals, "czars," or governors. They have found the need for such centralized power, and considering the business genius and wealth in these industries it certainly is no reflection on the pros to suggest that they might do well to employ a capable man in like capacity.

In financing the employment of such a man, I believe it within the realm of probability that the manufacturers of golf goods would contribute readily to a fund sufficient to maintain the man and an office along the right lines. There are notable business men in the United States who have retired from active business with fortunes, to devote themselves principally to playing golf. Among that class it should not be hard to find a man whose love for the game and his intense interest would make him ideal for the situation in mind. Perhaps one who is not subject to the temptation to play at every opportunity would be better, but that's a matter that could be very easily decided.

Certainly the manufacturers of golf goods have enough to gain from the P. G. A. functioning to the fullest extent of its scope, to make their participation in such financing a profitable move, without the remotest idea of any particular manufacturer making unfair use of the office.

What Can the P. G. A. Do?

As the conditions now exist, the P. G. A. doesn't mean all that it should to the pros, to the clubs, the members or the U. S. G. A. One of the obvious things to be done is to have the P. G. A. membership a very positive identification of a fully qualified professional. Professionals of worth know how seriously the job situation is today with clubs hiring half-baked kids who will take a job for any little money just to be called "pros." The clubs get a "burning" on this, that's true, but in the meanwhile good pros are out of jobs and the situation at the clubs having the worthless pros are tending toward taking away concession privileges from the pros, good, bad or indifferent, who follow these pseudo-pros.

A pro to be a P. G. A. pro should be a man who has passed tests that reveal him plainly to be a pro who is a credit to his club and to his profession and an asset to his members. Determination of such status might even go to the extent of examining boards whose credentials, issued to the P. G. A. member, would have the validity and value of certificates on the

order of a registered pharmacist's certificate.

With such an order prevailing it is not too wide a stretch for the imagination to conceive the day when a club belonging to the U. S. G. A., the Western, or any other of the substantial club bodies, would consider only P. G. A. members in good standing for pro jobs, and that the P. G. A. employment service would be of vast benefit to its members as well as an assurance of competent professional service to the clubs.

There is no well informed person who can maintain that there hasn't been a wonderful improvement in the pro credit situation. The P. G. A. sectional bodies have a lot of gratitude due them from the manufacturers on this account. Under rigid and correct qualifications for membership in the P. G. A. this matter of credit must figure prominently. If a man wilfully and woefully disregards his obligations he is doing an injustice to his fellow pros who are first class business men because it is too often that the faults of the few in the pro field are proclaimed by the loud-mouthed and unthinking to be the failings of the whole flock. Education in simplified and standardized accounting methods would be something falling within the province of a thoroughly functioning P. G. A. With the limited executive facilities now available this and other work that the officials are ambitious to do, is simply out of the question.

Need More Publicity

Pro golf is direly in need of more persistent and planned publicity.

Part of the duties of a paid executive secretary would put the right emphasis on supplying this need.

The P. G. A. championship has first class earning potentialities for the winner due to being second only to the National Open in distinction won by the pro who triumphs over an all-star field. As the event now is staged, it comes so late in the season that football news crowds it down to brief mention, and the pro winner is too late for lucrative exhibition dates. Publicity angles like that should be considered.

Internally the professional field is often in ignorance of details of "what's going on." The other day I was asked about the ball sweepstakes to be conducted at clubs whose pros were P. G. A. members, the proceeds to be used for the P. G. A.

Benevolent Fund. The inquiring pro said he had heard something about this fund raising campaign but didn't know the details. Nor did I. So far as I have been able to learn no information on this subject has been sent to newspapers or golf magazines. A case where the pro heart was ahead of the pro hand. Not that I blame the P. G. A. officials, for I know from frequent observation that if they had to care for all the detail work that comes to them, they'd have no time left for the job that gives them their bread and butter.

GOLFDOM has no axe to grind in this matter. One of the big planks in our platform is to see the good pros get the good that is coming to them and in this connection we advance the suggestion of a highly competent and industrious paid executive secretary. We're not siding in with the boys who blame the P. G. A. for everything. Taking all angles into consideration the P. G. A. has done one hell of a lot more than was expected when it took on its lease of life in its present

shape. Its achievements have been made despite a sad lack of co-operation from fellows who are hair-trigger critics of the P. G. A. shortcomings. The P. G. A. officials know what a task it is to get the lads to come to the meetings, to pay dues promptly and take a constructive co-operative interest in the P. G. A. affairs. There is with us always the boy who is quick to howl and slow to help.

But now the P. G. A. has made a far advance from the day when it took in anybody who would sign up. Potentially it is one of the big leaguers in golf. The time is here for its further advance in accordance with the demands and promise of the situation. The P. G. A. is entitled to recognition of a standing so high that no good pro could afford to stay out of it.

GOLFDOM very respectfully and sincerely suggests that the next national P. G. A. meeting give thoughtful consideration to this matter. In the meanwhile, if any professional has comment to make on this subject—for or against—GOLFDOM will welcome his statement.



Chisholm photo

Tom Stevens and His Staff, With the Pro Shop in the Background

"Champion's" Treatment Makes Sales

By TOM STEVENS,

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THE golf professional of today has to be more than just a student of golf and an expert player. He has to be a salesman of top water. Competition has caused the modern pro to become a real salesman.

In his shop he must carry a full line of supplies in every detail. He must know

his merchandise and be able to push it in an efficient and quick manner.

My shop is divided into a salesroom, a workshop and a buffing room. In this way my stock is kept clean and I can display it in ways that are attractive to my patrons. Some new display, something fresh, always helps. They notice things and stop to look the new articles over. It may be just what they have wanted but only these displays would have brought it to their eyes. To have tables showing golf apparel and little "what nots" for the