

PRO PROFITS

Some Paragraphs on What the Leading Pros Are Doing and Thinking

By HERB GRAFFIS

JACK MACKIE, stalwart and smiling "old master" in pro golf, for more than 20 years has been employing an idea that most people have heralded as a great and comparatively new idea in the selling of golf clubs. The Inwood mentor's practice of registering clubs dates back to the time when a good part of the clubs were bench-made, and it has amply demonstrated its practical value as repeat sales to players who today are far away from Jack's shop testify.

Not only in its value in selling and servicing the club buyers but as a check against uncharged sales does this Mackie method of registering every club received and sold in his shop work out to pay its way. Jack correctly points out that the leaks in a pro's business methods probably would move him to tears if he ever knew just how large they were in the aggregate. For instance, Mackie cites, in any shop a member may hurry in and take a club out and in the rush, or due to the diversion of some conversation with the pro or his assistant, the sale is not recorded. When it comes time to check the inventory of shop goods, the missing club's registry number is given to the club cleaner and the chances are he discovers it in the bag of one member who innocently acquired it without cost. Then the charge ticket is made out, of course.

Too bad balls can't be checked the same way for we seldom run across a pro who isn't firmly of the opinion that the losses of uncharged balls purchased during the Saturday, Sunday and holiday rush periods are too big for comfort.

Mackie keeps his registry record in a wide-paged columnar book. In the first column he has "Club" under which the name of the club is written in. Then he has "Number" for the registration number that is stamped by his shop man on each club in his stock. A columnar head of "Model," "Finish," "Shaft" (steel or wood), "Length," "Weight," "Grip," "Balance," "In

Stock" (giving date on which the club was received), "Date Sold" and "Buyer."

Although keeping the data may seem like quite a job to some, there's really nothing to it except reasonable care, Mackie maintains. In addition to being a real service factor for the pro and his trade, the record book serves as a very impressive detail of staging the sale, for the member naturally feels there is more value to a pedigree club and one that can be exactly replaced.

One of the bright spots in 1929 was the very hearty adoption by the pros of the sentiment expressed in the old Ozark folk song, "You Gotta Quit Kickin' My Hound Around." As free men, sound of wind, limb and intellect, and as citizens of a free country, the pros were due to call a halt on the loose talk directed against them.

In the proper sweet spirit of Christian forgiveness that should glow in the bosom around Christmas time when these lines are being written, we can say that we are not subscribing to any motive of malice against the scribes of *Sporting Goods Illustrated*, whose tirade against the pros last fall proved that an ill wind can blow some good. The blast that magazine directed against the pros was appraised by experts and the pros have profited from the findings. Having gone to school with one of the bright young men of that book and confessing to a degree of admiration for his technique in beating the tom-toms and burning red-fire on the slightest provocation to collect a crowd, we were a bit sorry to see him start to pick on the pros merely because he had fallen into the bad habit of thinking the pros wouldn't sock back.

Fred Henwood, secretary-treasurer of the Pacific Northwest P. G. A., and pro at Rainier G. C., Seattle, Wash., in taking the editor of the sporting goods paper to task, "more in sorrow than in anger," and made the following pertinent expressions:

"What has the professional golfer ever done to you or your writer to make you feel the way you do towards us? Is it because the pros are just beginning to wake up and get together and try to better their lot? If this is the reason for showing so much open distaste towards us you are right; we have snapped out of the rut and we hope that in the very near future we will be able to meet some of this unfair competition that we have had to put up with.

"The writer of the article in your magazine mentions that this is the age of specialists. Last week I had the pleasure of running into one of your specialist dealer's handiwork. A member of my club came to me with a driver and brassie 42½ inches long and weighing 15 ounces. This man was a novice; he had never had a club in his hands before. Do you think it would be possible for me to have taught that man how to use such a club? No professional would ever think of selling such clubs, least of all to a beginner. It is needless to mention that the man promptly returned the clubs and there is one store which has lost a customer.

"Surely the manufacturer would not let his better merchandise be sold by us if we did not pay for it, so it is high time that some people were called on this credit situation and have it crammed down their throats that the pro is a good credit risk. If he is not, why do the manufacturers use every means in their power to sell to the pro? Personally, I have not heard of any manufacturer or his agent crying out that the pro is a poor credit risk. Far from it, they are only too glad to get his business, and I fully believe that the manufacturers now are going after the pro business more than ever. They have seen what happens when their goods get into the stores.

"To conclude with, I do not want you to get the impression that I am down on the stores. There is room for all of us, providing business is clean, but you will find that when a golfer wishes to be fitted (you will notice I say "fitted") with a golf club, he will go to a pro. Why? For the same reason that when you want a tooth pulled you go to a dentist and not to a hat shop."

"Don't bury the club-maker. Keep him in sight, for he provides great selling atmosphere to the pro shop." This dope comes from Willie Hoare who went from a pro shop into a spot as one of the star

producers of the Wilson-Western staff. Naturally Bill believes in plugging a factory line to the limit, but still he's a strong advocate of putting the club-maker in a place in the pro shop sun, for he says the members like to talk to the club-maker and gratify their innate curiosity. Keeping the club-maker handy helps to keep the members around the shop and promotes the shop staff's standing as authorities on clubs, either bench- or factory-made, Hoare adds.

Something to that. It helps to establish and maintain the distinctively pro shop atmosphere that can't be imitated by any store.

Jim Carberry, president of the Illinois P. G. A., is an eloquent and frequent preacher on the matter of replacing divots. Pros should be the leaders in this practice, Jim maintains, and he adds that the popular, too true idea that the star players, both pro and amateur, are careless about replacing divots, is making it hard to get courses for tournaments. A clean-cut divot from an expert's shot can be replaced without damage to a course, so Jim points out. He pleads with his brothers-in-arms to provide good examples in replacing the turf.

Phil Hessler, who has been a rising light in Wichita Falls (Tex.) pro golf for some time, and his brother have a nifty little stunt they are trying to get some manufacturer to handle for them. This is a simple teeing device for instruction. It has a tube reservoir which will hold about two dozen balls. The balls are released from the reservoir by pressure of a foot-pedal at one side of the device and roll down, one at a time, onto a rubber tee. The base of the device is a thick leather belting material so the clubs are not injured. The rubber tee part is easily replaceable although the one on the initial production has stood up under several thousand shots without bad wear.

The device saves a lot of time and energy in teaching and in net work. It looks to be a very good bet for buyer, pupil and seller, and we are hoping the Hessler lads will make some dough out of it.

Phil Gaudin, veteran operator in the pro corps, dropped into the office the other day and unbosomed himself of the following words of wisdom, which we are passing along to the elect for consideration:

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS to the P. G. A.

Having cooperated in the foundation of the P. G. A. (its first meeting being held in Wanamaker's), and working with its members for their own advancement and the good of the industry generally, we again make this New Year's pledge of our wholehearted cooperation for the future.

JOHN WANAMAKER NEW YORK

Wholesale Golf Distributors

"Probably in the majority of cases the pro's friends who can do him the most good are high handicap players. We need to have our contacts with them more frequently and under the happiest circumstances. Our best chance to do this, collectively, is in the pro-amateur tournaments that so many of the P. G. A. bodies run. The low handicap amateurs always can take care of themselves, but these other fellows we have to watch out for. It seems the pros handling these tournaments should make a special effort to get high handicap men who will get more of a 'kick' out of playing with the pros. The draws for partners might be made from a hat so even a fellow with a 20 handicap might draw some star among the pros.

"The fine sportsmanship and good fellowship of the pros would show to brilliant advantage under these conditions and I am sure that the fortune-favored amateurs would talk about the events in a way that would be very definitely helpful to the entire pro personnel as well as to the individual pros concerned."

Moss on the fairways is almost a sure sign that fertilizer is needed.



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