

Pros Hope to Help Small Clubs Advance in 1930

By AMBROSE MacDIVOT

THE pro golf situation in the larger cities is in better shape for the 1930 golf season than it ever has been at the start of any previous season. Not that there isn't plenty to worry about and to strive to correct, but every business has that. Some of the boys will have tough luck and some will be the victims of their own shortcomings, but the marked improvement in pro business practice during the past few years, the greatly accelerated effective functioning of the national and sectional P. G. A. bodies and the unfailing action of providence in acting as the pros' friend, will get the big town boys in better shape than ever before, according to present signs.

It's the young fellows in the smaller places who have their fill of problems to contend with this year and in their handling of the situation many expect to see one of the happiest details of progress in pro history. It's very much to the interest of the metropolitan district pros to see that the boys in the bushes are aided in improving their service to their clubs and in building their incomes, for if the laddies in the nine-hole clay-tee territories can't get an encouraging wage they are going to swarm into the big districts, take jobs at any price at all, and in addition to demoralizing pro income, do a sad job of messing up things generally.

"All generalities are untrue, including this one," said the wise Frenchman, and that applies to the picture of the plight that will be the lot of the pros unless the small town situation is taken in hand. As a matter of fact there are some great kids developing in the pro business in these small towns. They are youngsters who are high-school, and frequently college, graduates who have deliberately and thoughtfully picked out pro golf as a career, even after learning that the popular idea of pro income is too high. This writer recalls a young fellow from one of the mid-western states who was a delegate at the P. G. A. convention in Atlanta. This boy was at-

tending university classes in the morning and working as a pro in the afternoon. He considered that the smaller town pro job, in the hands of a working and thinking man, was one of the best jobs to be had in town. The golf club was the center of the community's social activity and properly developed, meant a merchandising proposition that would yield a good income. Now, this boy was extending pro working activities far beyond the point of sitting in the shop and collecting for ball sales, playing a few rounds with low-handicap members, and giving a lesson now and then. He was a community asset by any enlightened rating.

Growing Into Bigger Job.

At the greenkeepers' convention in Louisville, I met a kid named Bill Tendler from Anderson, Ind., who was another of this type. Bill has the pro job and he could "let it go at that," but he doesn't. He was nosing around all the time to pick up ideas that would help him to make his course better without spending much money. He knows if the pro can contribute some practical live idea to the construction and maintenance of the course or to the increase of clubhouse business, the club is going ahead and the pro's earning power goes ahead with it.

"There are a lot of young punks who learn to play pretty good golf and they think that's all there is to the pro's job," Tendler says. "They are happy just as long as they can be called pros. But they are not worth much to their clubs and for that reason never get very far themselves. With a smaller club a pro who handles his job right has to be not only a player who will represent his club creditably if not famously, but he has to be a patient, competent teacher, a developer of business for the club and himself, a pretty fair greenkeeper, a clubhouse manager, in some respects the acting secretary, sports and pastimes chairman and house and green-chairman, caddy-master and if he sees the

need, a lot of times the locker-room man. That sounds like a hell of a lot of work for one man to handle, and it is, but you get paid dough for it and the club members appreciate it so you always have a chance to increase your earnings. You take the average resident's income in smaller towns and you will see that a pro who is a hustler and used his head can live like a king."

Officials Need to Know.

Some of the boys get discouraged and may say that Tendler's remarks are nothing but a lot of hooie, but they're not. Given the right man for a pro, the most important step to follow is to start an astute campaign of education on the club officials. There is lots of room for that work in the metropolitan districts as well as in the smaller towns. There are big city clubs paying pros \$100 a month and then wondering what is wrong with the way the pro department is run. A fellow who takes a job as responsible as a good club pro job is, for \$25 a week, is the first thing that's wrong. I'll say that always and as a sprightly booster of the pro cause.

What's A Pro Job.

It would do all the qualified pros a lot of good if the club officials who hired the pros knew what the pro was supposed to do. I got a letter from the president of one club who wrote:

"What are the duties of a golf club professional on a small nine-hole course, aside from procuring and selling merchandise? We have a pro on our course who more or less gives his services in return for the privilege of using the course at any and all times. What I would like to know particularly is what fundamental duties this man should perform in return for the privileges that are accorded him."

After talking it over with a number of the fellows who had come up to big jobs in pro golf after successful development in smaller jobs, this inquiring official was answered and it seems to us the answer outlines a good general policy for the betterment of the pro job in the smaller clubs. The reply read:

"It seems to me that if a live young pro were on the job he could make himself a pretty good spot at your club right now if he were to show interest and pride in the condition and layout of the course, be available for instruction, and in general, make himself useful and helpful in developing the club's resources and club spirit.

In this way, a pro with some vision can make his activity pay him because in the long run that there will be a lot more golf interest and consequently a lot more business in clubs, balls, etc.

"Under conditions where a pro is paid, I should outline his major responsibility as the following:

"(1) Being available for instruction, advice and supervision of tournaments.

"(2) Being on the job as a merchandiser of the right playing equipment and an adviser to the buyers.

"(3) A promoter of club interest and spirit.

"(4) Even if the club has a greenkeeper, to work with the greenkeeper on a harmonious basis in bringing the course up to the pink of condition.

"(5) To see that the club gets plenty of publicity.

"(6) Group golf lessons for women, children, etc. (This will not take much time and will develop a lot of private lessons).

"(7) Do repair work for members on clubs.

"(8) In general, take enlightened and sincere, but not a meddlesome interest in each detail of the club operations to the end that the pro and his members all would be proud of the fact that they belong to the club.

"I think that a bright fellow who really knows what it's all about and has the right sort of character can take a situation like yours and make himself one beautiful little job out of it by intensive cultivation. The pros are developing rather satisfactorily along these lines when you consider that the pro's job as a real business is one of the infant industries of the country."

Rutgers Again Stages Tabloid Greenkeeping School

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY, the state university of New Jersey, at New Brunswick, again conducted a highly successful and practical greenkeeping short course Feb. 24-28.

This year's short course was attended by a larger enrollment than last year, there being 66 students at the 1930 session. Some of the men who attended the previous session returned and found that the value of the course continues to increase and enthusiasm of the greenkeepers and pros in the course advances. Under the direction of F. J. Helyar the course brought before the attendants turf stars of Rutgers' staff.