

Set of Books No Stymie to Pro with Brains and Ambition

By DAN GOSS

CAN YOU stretch your imagination enough to picture a normal, sane person, of average intelligence or better, starting out of his own volition under a blazing sun, a hundred in the shade and no shade, and really enjoy hitting a little round white ball?

That is, "enjoying it" when he is hitting the ball as he thinks he should. But when he's not, Dante's Inferno would be Coney Island compared to the tortures he suffers. All on his own volition. He can stop when he wishes—yet he'll carry on, hour after hour, mile after mile, keeping every nerve under absolute control, performing tasks of precision that rival the Johannason Blocks by judging distances up to 200 yards to within a FEW INCHES.

Stretch your imagination again and picture any human able to do the above several days a week every week, yet revolting and finding the silliest kind of excuses to keep putting off until tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow a task that can be performed in 15 minutes a day, in his own office or shop, under a whirring, oscillating electric fan and with a 5-gallon cooler of ice water at his elbow. And the 15 minute task means dollars and cents to him, means far more than ten times the same amount of time spent out under the sun playing or practicing.

It is obvious, as I pointed out in a previous article, that any pro, by his mental arithmetic tasks, has the ability to work with figures. It is equally obvious to me that the same pro who will spend hours practicing to get a fade out of his iron shots has the patience, ten times over what is needed, to devote a few minutes a day to the thermometer of his business—his books.

I don't know of two things that are more parallel in a pro's life than his books on his business and his game.

When he's hitting his shots he's in heaven. All's well with the world. But when he's smothering his tee shots, shanking his irons, pulling his putts off line and other things that send him home with the thought "If dinner is ready I won't

eat—if it isn't I'll raise hell" (you know, just pure cussedness), you can talk all you want to about hell having no fury like a woman scorned; I'll still say that a sailor, just off a whaler, sounds like a minister of the gospel compared to this pro.

Books Catch Errors

And the same with a set of books. Suppose you've posted the payment on your show cases to the firm that sold you that motor with the buffing wheel on one side and the grinder on the other—because the two happen to total the same for that month. Before long, nasty letters start coming in from the people that sold you the motor threatening to come out and get it, and all the while you are trying to convince them that you *did* pay that installment—AND YOUR BOOKS CAN PROVE IT! And then you find the error! You, too, use some of the words that can only be found in the newest Broadway plays.

Or, after you've balanced your books and find them a nickle out and then do it over and find them a dime out, and the third trial shows you both previous balances were wrong—a missed two-foot putt for that doubled bet on the back side is a mere nothing compared to your present feelings.

But whenever you want to find how much you owe the Off-Line Golf Ball Co. for balls for the previous month; or the Ever-Hook Brassie Mfg. Co. for their month's shipments and you turn a couple of pages and the figures jump right up, accurate to the penny compared with their statement—the books are O. K. And when you strike your monthly balance and find that everything is jake and even tho you lost \$1.80 instead of making at least a hundred over your drawing account, as you had thought—you still feel good.

And whether you believe it or not—and you won't—its a hundred times easier to keep a set of books accurately than it is to shoot any course in anything like par

—even tho you are playing winter rules by improving your lie.

I'll just cite one instance. Walk into any business college in your city, or any close-by city. You will find boys and girls there who only three months ago received their mail R. F. D., who were considered Sears & Roebuck customers and who with hundreds of others, on his or her same route, made the postman change his Lizzie to a one ton truck so he could haul all the catalogs. Some of them lived so far back in the country that anyone wearing a pair of knickers was followed for blocks. Six months from the time they enter this business college 90 per cent of these youngsters will be able to make a set of books lay down and yell "Uncle" or hop up and say "Mammy" like only Jolson can.

Do you know of any boy, six months off the farm, who has stepped out and shot any course in anything like par figures even tho he took "one over" on half the holes. Neither do I nor do I ever expect to see one in spite of all the prodigies that blossom forth yearly.

Isn't it obvious then that if you can do something that requires years of patience and effort that you can easily learn to do something that the average country boy can learn in six months? I think it is.

Personally—and mind you its my own belief—and I may not have a second to the motion in GOLFDOM—I believe the average pro refuses to give thought of any consequence to the accounting part of his business for the same reason that thousands of dubs believe a pro can't help them with lessons.

Terms Easy to Learn

How many times have you heard a dub say, "Aw, what's the use of taking lessons? All he talks about is stiff left arm, pivot, throw the club head at the ball, don't stop—follow through, and a lot of other junk. He never tells me anything I can understand." Haven't you heard that, or words to that effect, more times than you would really have liked to have heard them?

The dub that gets the urge to take up the game feels like the average pro feels when he gets the urge to put in a real set of books. He may call in an accountant and when he hears such terms as BALANCE SHEET, VOUCHER SYSTEM, TRADING STATEMENT, PHYSICAL INVENTORY, PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT, DEPRECIATION, TURNOVER, he, too, may begin to get that "Aw, what's the use" feeling and not even start. And

so like the dub's desire to take up the game—another good intention has gone to make pavement for hell. I've been told that hell is paved with good intentions. I wouldn't doubt it. That's a fitting place for them.

It is just as wrong for an accountant to start a pro off, who has the urge, with advanced terms as it is for a pro to start that way with a dub. Both should keep their language of the subject on a par with the listener's ability to understand. School children are taught multiplication first—then algebra; never vice versa.

Many pros forget that dubs understand nothing about such terms as "stiff left arm" and "stay back of the ball" at the beginning even tho the instructions are interpolated with "Here let me show you what I mean" every now and then. Likewise, accountants forget that men who are considered successful and smart business men can't keep a set of single-entry books.

No Use Hiring Others

A smart business man will give as his excuse that he neither has the time or the desire to learn because he can hire men to do it. But he'll also admit that even though he does, he still must find some way of knowing if the man he has hired to do the work is doing it properly. He can either learn himself so he can check up the man hired or hire someone else to check the first man—and someone else to check the second man, etc. *But he's no better off until he actually learns for himself whether his work is being done right.*

You can hire someone to keep books for you because you think you can't—or don't want to—which is better than not having it done at all. But if you do, you must still learn for yourself whether it is being done properly. So why not do it yourself in the first place which will take very little more time than is needed to check up on the man you employ.

And again, doing it yourself is more valuable in the same sense that knowing what makes a car run gives you more assurance in driving the car than if you just knew that stepping on the starter makes it go. Its the same as trying to improve your game by reading about it or having someone tell you what to do. Haven't you found that you could learn more in an hour of practice than you could by reading ten syndicated newspaper services? Wouldn't you rather watch Charles Hall hit tee shots for five minutes than have

him try and tell you how he does for an hour?

Now as the revenue officer said as he started down the cellar of the bootlegger's home, "Let's get down to cases."

It's easy to criticize but constructive criticism is something else. It isn't my purpose to haul you over the coals just because I think I can get away with it. My purpose is to try to show you that if you'll just devote a little time to a function of your business that the majority neglect because of laziness, because they don't think it important, you'll find it the most interesting work you have ever done—and by far the most profitable of any you do.

In using several hundred words to lead up to this point, I did so with the same thought in mind that a mother uses to give a baby castor oil. She mixes it with orange juice to make it easier to take. I've led you along trying to make it easier to take not because it's so hard to take but because if I came right to the point I'd get as far as the mother would that would say to her small son, "Here, buddy boy, is ten cents. Go to the drug store and buy 10c worth of castor oil—AND TAKE IT."

You have this advantage. You can gauge the results of your effort before you begin taking what you would call "castor oil" or worse before you begin taking the doses. You can gauge your results not by horrible examples that I'll point out but by showing you IN YOUR OWN AFFAIRS how much better off you will be.

Now sit steady and let me finish because, like the round-about way of showing you in previous articles that cost marking and price tagging had a far greater significance than you imagined, I'll show you that certain things in your own business, that you do and have been doing, would mean a lot more to you—IF YOU KNEW HOW AND WHERE TO LOOK.

The first of the year you took your annual statement. What did it tell you? Here's what you could readily see: *Assets*: In this you had your cash in the bank, money owed you, inventory of your stock and a guess at your furniture and fixtures. *Liabilities*: How much you owed and maybe who owed it to you and when it was due.

NOW, HONESTLY, WHAT ELSE CAN YOU TELL AT A GLANCE FROM YOUR STATEMENT? It is supposed to be a history of the previous year's operation. Can you tell if you are giving too much credit? I gave credit for years and stopped for a

reason far more important than because they wouldn't pay their accounts. Can you tell how many turnovers you had? Can you tell if your bank loans are too much?

In other words, outside of whether you made or lost money what else does your statement tell you?

Now grab a chair or something to brace you because you are in for a series of shocks.

Supposing a salesman walked in and said "Here's a keen line. Its going like a house afire all over the country. I'm going right over to your competitor and give it to him *because it will take you four months to sell your first shipment.*"

After your first impulse to crown him—and not queen of the May either—has died down and the impulse to throw him out on his ear has passed, if you'll listen you'll hear this: "We have obtained a copy of your statement for last year. We find that it takes you four months to sell whatever you buy—on an average throughout the year. That means you must have lots of merchandise that you keep for six and eight months because your ball sales are quick turnover and your other sales must be very poor to slow you down to a four month's average."

What Turnover Means

If you think he's a magician get out your statement. Divide your stock on hand into your total sales for the year, both cash and credit—or all cash if your accounts are guaranteed. Is it more than three to one or is it four, five or six to one. That is the answer to how many times you turned your stock for the year.

If your stock inventories \$3,000 and your sales for the year were \$9,000 you got three turnovers, one every four months. If your sales were twice as large as your stock you got two turnovers. Now do you call that good business? Keeping stock on hand from four to six months—when you can get it inside of two weeks at the most—and more often in three days from the time you wire.

If your statement shows you that you keep merchandise four to six months on an average, it means that if you'll speed up your turnovers by watching your purchases more carefully and pushing stock that isn't moving, you'll get more interest on your investment; you'll be able to carry a bigger and better assortment of merchandise—which obviously will increase your sales—ON YOUR SAME CAPITAL and in addition reduce your bank

loans. And on top of it all you'll be able to pay more promptly.

DO YOU SEE WHAT EFFECT SLOW TURNOVERS HAVE ON A BUSINESS? Do you see the advantage of quick turnovers: no tied up capital; no dead stock; no interest to banks on loans to pay for merchandise that's frozen in your stock?

Evils of Credit Sales

Take credit sales. Municipal course operators particularly will be interested in this. Are you giving too much or too little? By "too little" I mean can you afford to give more. Let's get out Sir Statement and take a peek. To make it easy I'll use round, even figures.

If you gave credit you had losses. Say you lost \$100. On a margin of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % it means you made sales of \$300 that didn't bring you a penny profit—and the chances are this loss will be more than \$100 when you add the expense and time of trying to collect; interest to banks on borrowed money that you used to pay for the merchandise; loss of discount, etc.

But you know that, don't you. But do you know if you are still giving too much credit? Let's see. How much do you owe that is past due? How much is owed to you? How do they compare? How much nicer would your statement look if you had all that was past due taken off of what you owed, whether current or past due?

Now has it occurred to you that you are using **YOUR CREDIT** to carry your customers. You can see this easily if you owe and can't pay because people owe you. So, in addition to the danger of having credit losses from accounts that are permitted to run, you are endangering your own credit by permitting your customers to ride you.

Aside from the actual losses, too much credit—and your statement will tell you if it is—means frozen capital that could be put in present stock, or could be used to reduce bank loans, or reduce your indebtedness or in a number of ways.

I'll just touch on too little credit. Many pro's are wondering if time payment is a good plan. Yes, if you have capital to carry accounts or if you can discount your notes—and by all means get notes on time payments. You can because customers won't ask for time payments on small amounts. Generally it is only when you have sold a full set of irons or woods or a new bag—or two or three of these together.

Get notes, even if the buyer is good. Discount the notes at a bank and when

the bank sends them a notice they won't put it off with "I'll handle that next week" as they would you—and which might mean next month or the month after.

But enough for the time being. I've carried you through the training camp and found that you were equipped to perform your task. Now you are moving up—moving in to take your position in the front line trenches—where the battle really is. You've got the equipment and the ability to do your work. It may not be pleasant and won't be until you find you are hitting your targets by getting what you should know.

And when you do—as you will—if you'll follow me over the top right behind the barrage I've laid down with the aid of the artillery that has been firing at you for three months—wheels locked together—artillery that has been mustered from years of personal experience, you'll find that you'll capture every enemy position that has been a known or hidden bugaboo to your success. You find that the things you thought gigantic obstacles were mere mirages; that instead of a mountainous task that you always shuddered at they will prove mere molehills that will give you plenty of laughs in the future because you were afraid of them.

LEWIS WASHER ADDS TEE DATA PLATE

Watertown, Wisc.—Now that the tee box is being erased from the golf picture, due to the change from sand to the artificial tee, the G. B. Lewis Company believes that the most logical place for the number, yardage and par of a golf hole is on the face of their golf ball washer. The new plate is easily attached to the face of the washer by means of two hooks and two non-rusting screws.

At those holes where no washer has been provided the tee data plate can be easily attached to the standard metal tee stake and later on, when a washer is provided, it can be transferred from the tee stake to the face of the washer.

These tee data plates in 2-color enamel with the data numbers and letters, which can be changed if necessary, are reasonably priced and attractive.

