

Pacific Coast Pros Tell What Makes Pro a Prize to Club

FURTHER RESPONSE to GOLFDOM'S request that some of the successful professionals tell their ideas of how a pro can serve his club best, comes from two well-known and substantial Pacific coast professionals. Harold Sampson, president of the P. G. A. of Northern California and pro at Burlingame (Calif.) C. C., and Walter Pursey, president of the Pacific Northwest P. G. A., who is pro at Inglewood C. C., Seattle, Wash., outlines pro duties in a way that will help the younger fellows who are ambitious to make themselves more valuable to their clubs.

The comments of these two men also will be helpful to club officials who want to get competent men on the job rather than take a chance of lessening interest and service to club members by the employment of an inexperienced candidate just because he will work cheap.

Sampson advises:

Teaching Foremost

"The first thing a golf professional should be able to do is to teach. This is a vital point that concerns every club, for if a member plays badly he derives no pleasure from the game and soon loses interest and stops playing, with a resultant loss to all departments of the club. He does not himself frequent the club nor bring guests from whom green fees are derived to help cover course maintenance costs. The restaurant and other departments lose likewise.

"I know of a club where the play several years ago was about one-fourth of what it is at present, simply because the members had the impression that it was useless for them to try to learn golf unless they came by it naturally. This impression was brought about through inferior instruction, due to a false economy plan, whereby the club was hiring untrained professionals because it could get them for less money. The standard of play at this club today is greatly improved, and there are a number of very fine players listed among its members. It has been possible to improve the golf course through this increased activity, and no assessments were necessary to accomplish it.

"Clubs may make the mistake of believing they are saving money by hiring an untrained ex-caddie, who plays a good game and who will take the position cheap, but who is incapable of giving a service of any value. To be a competent teacher requires experience and intensive study which cannot be acquired by merely learning to play a good game.


"The professional, however, should be able to play a good game of golf in order that he may command the proper respect of his pupils, and also inspire them to make every effort to improve. If he is unable to play the game well, moreover, he cannot hope to be a good instructor, as one cannot impart knowledge that one does not already have.

"While the professional's duty is to devote as much time as possible to the work connected with the club, he should take enough time to play in tournaments occasionally, from which he will gain knowledge that will the better fit him to be an instructor and which he could not otherwise acquire. I believe it to be a wise thing that clubs should even insist that their professionals attend tournaments at various times, for aside from the fact that it helps to make them more competent teachers, their contact with other professionals, and men connected with the profession is helpful in keeping them abreast of the progress being made in the golfing world.

"He should also have a thorough knowledge of clubmaking and the qualifications of a good club maker. Most players do not realize it, but clubs aid very materially in playing a good game. I have seen players put badly off their game through buying clubs unsuited to them, and I attribute what success I have as a teacher a great deal to the fact that I always see that the player is properly outfitted. It is far more important for the average player to have good clubs than for the expert to have them, as the expert can overcome their defects, while the average player cannot. The knowledge of turning out correct clubs cannot be had by merely learning to play

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a good game, it is gained through experience and schooling.

"The pro should have a knowledge of the duties of a caddie, and should interest himself to see that they maintain a high standard of service, for on their service depends a great deal of the pleasure the player will derive from the game. A bad caddie can ruin a whole day's play for a player, and it must always be kept in mind that the player is there to enjoy himself and everything should be done to see that he gets the greatest amount of pleasure possible out of the game.

"The pro should have a thorough knowledge of the rules of the game and of how to conduct tournaments.

"Last, but by no means least, the pro should be actively interested in the maintenance of the course. Many clubs would save considerable money annually if they would turn this matter over to the pro and greenkeeper to handle, instead of electing a new green-chairman, who often wastes much money through his lack of knowledge, although his intentions are undoubtedly of the best. Course maintenance is a science and cannot be learned in an office.

"The pro must be a good student of human nature. He must lend his efforts to meet the personality of each of his pupils, or the members of his club; he must in every sense see that the needs of the player are taken care of in a pleasant and competent way in order that the player may get the fullest amount of pleasure out of his association with the club.

"You realize, I am sure, through your attendance of our meetings, the progress the P. G. A. is making in training its members along these lines, and I believe if clubs made an effort to hire a P. G. A. member when they need a professional, they would receive more satisfactory service.

"Comprehensively, then, a pro's duties

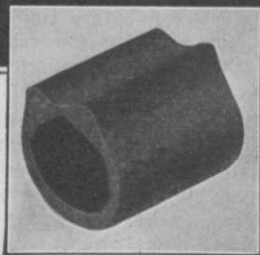
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Purse Lists Qualifications

Walter Pursey lists his idea of the qualifications of a qualified professional as follows:

- Teacher and player.
- Personality.
- Experience.
- Character.
- Credit Rating.
- P. G. A. membership.

He goes into detail by saying:

"Taking qualification No. 1: A good practical teacher is a great asset to a club. By this I mean a man who is capable of correcting the older players' faults and developing the youngsters' game with a good sound swing but no unnecessary trimmings.

"No. 2. A likeable personality is important if the pro is going to get on well with his members. Tact and intelligence must play a big part in this. A man who knows when to smile and when to be serious according to the nature of any grievance a player fancies he has will go a long way.

"No. 3. Previous experience is necessary which would include all previous positions

held, ability as a clubmaker and knowledge of greenkeeping which is often necessary in an advisory way.

"No. 4. Credit rating. If this is unsound it would disqualify any application I would have before me without going further. If a man's credit is bad he cannot take care of his members in a merchandising way and would tend to undermine the prestige of his club. Also a man who is careless of his accounts probably would be careless in other ways.

"No. 5. Member of Professional Golfers' association. This I consider necessary to protect a club against bums or floaters who drift into town today and out again tomorrow usually to the detriment of the club that employed them. Conditions of membership in these associations are so strict and they are helpful to a pro in so many ways that if he isn't a member of some organization there may be something wrong with the individual unless his experience and character are well known. A P. G. A. rating is practically a guarantee that the individual concerned is a class "A" man in all respects.

"Assuming that we have been able to select a man with these qualifications plus a

willingness to be helpful in any other way possible what should we as a club do about it? I would suggest that the entire body of officers and members should patronize the pro for lessons and equipment whenever necessary if they wish such a man to remain long at their club and be rewarded for his spirit, his ability and his effort."

Penn State Gives Details of 1932 Short Course and Conference

PENNSYLVANIA State College will hold its annual Greenkeeper's Short Course, Feb. 1-26, and Conference, Feb. 24-26, at State College, Pa. This work was entered upon four years ago with a great deal of misgiving on the part of the faculty.

The need of such instruction was recognized but whether many greenkeepers would be responsive was the question. The first meeting proved that such fears were groundless. Greenkeepers turned out in large numbers. They entered into the spirit of the conference.

A committee of greenkeepers representing the different sections of the state is appointed each year at the conference. This committee meets with the faculty committee and offers suggestions for the annual conference and research programs. In this manner the topics selected for discussion are those problems which the greenkeepers themselves feel are the most pressing.

The conference program for the February meeting is built around the insect and disease identification and control problems. The past season in Pennsylvania has proven that this is the time when such a program would be extremely helpful. Other topics will also be considered to avoid presenting a narrow program.

The usual four weeks greenkeeper's short course is again being offered. In conducting this course as well as the conference a number of men on the staff are used. In this way those taking the work come in contact with several highly trained specialists. Each of these men attempt to present those phases of his work which will be of use to those interested in fine turf problems.

A fine turf grass man who has both practical experience and scientific information in his field has a marked advantage over men who lack one or the other of these qualifications. This nation will be passing through a readjustment period for several years following the present finan-

cial crisis. During this period many old methods will have to be discarded, expenditures will have to be cut way down. The man who is well versed in the fundamentals will make fewer mistakes than the man who lacks such information. Greenkeepers, appreciating this condition, are enrolling for the greenkeeping courses.

The fourth annual Greenkeepers' Conference, Dr. Austin L. Patrick, chairman, should be of value to all persons interested in turf management, including superintendents of golf courses, parks, and large estates, as well as green-chairmen.

The program:

Wednesday a. m.—

9:00—Registration.

10:00—Welcome, Dean R. L. Watts.

10:10—The Research Program, S. W. Fletcher, Director of Research.

10:40—Report of the Pennsylvania Fine Turf Research Committee, Joseph Valentine, Chairman.

11:00—Observations on Golf Course Problems in Pennsylvania, 1931, N. Schmitz.

Wednesday p. m.

2:00—Diagnosis and Treatment of Turf Grass Diseases, A. S. Dahl and H. W. Thurston.

Thursday—Protecting Turf from Insects and Other Pests.

Morning session beginning at—

8:30—General Discussion and Description of Insects (illustrated), L. B. Smith.

Moles, Earthworms, and Slugs, L. E. Dills.

Insects Affecting Fine Turf (illustrated). Description, life histories, habits, and damage which they cause, L. B. Smith.

Afternoon session beginning at—

1:30—Insecticides: Description, Methods of Preparation and Use—H. E. Hodgkiss.

Discussion of Various Control Methods Recommended as a Means of Preventing Damage by Various Insects and Pests, L. B. Smith.

Question Box. (A discussion of individual problems.)

Friday a. m.—General Soil Relationship to Fine Turf Grass Problems.

8:30—Soil Solution, F. G. Merkle.

Soil Treatment and Grass Growth: Effect of Mercury Compounds and Lead Arsenate, J. W. White.

Effect of Acidity, H. B. Musser, J. W. White.

Details of enrollment may be secured from Dean of the School of Agriculture, State College, Pa.