

Make Members Forget Grief Is Pro 1932 Keynote

By HERB GRAFFIS

ONE OF THE smartest pros in the country was in GOLFDOM's padded cell the other day, telling about his plans for the 1932 season. This fellow is one of the pioneer American homebreds, having graduated into a pro job with his first pair of long pants.

He is at one of the country's wealthy clubs, where the folks are high society. Too obvious pepper in the pro department would cause upward tilting of the nostrils and refined snorts of disapproval. The folks are good sportsmen and sportswomen, but not of the type to run high temperatures on any pep-up ideas.

So, what this man is going to do to handle the situation is to submit to his chairman and to the head of the women's committee ideas for tournament events that would fit nicely into the club's character and have things made livelier in that fashion.

Another thing he is going to do is something that every pro in the country ought to do. He says his members, even though they are rich men, are getting business hell on all sides down-town. When they come out to the club they are out there to forget and be refreshed. He is going to talk nothing but golf and get their minds off of troubles and the "repression." He says—and he's right—that one of the pro's most important duties in depression periods is to get the members to forget themselves.

He said one of his members gave him the tip-off last summer. This member expressed the conviction that if a fellow had his health everything else was "velvet."

The Sunshine Boys

The power of pleasant suggestion should be employed by every pro each time he gets a chance to talk to a member. The reason the member comes out to play often is to forget his worries and to be cheered up. What happens when the pro greets the worried brother? Well, here's almost a verbatim report of a dialogue overheard at a club last July:

Member—Hello Bill. How's things?

Pro—Not so hot, Mr. Züch. The people ain't buying.

Member—The hell they're not? They haven't anything to do at their offices, they might as well come out here and play.

Pro—Well, that may be the way it looks to you, but my business is away off.

Member—How much?

Pro—Oh, I don't know. I had a pretty good business at the start of the year, but this month stinks.

Member—Well how much behind for the year?

Pro—I guess about 10%.

Member—Well what to hell! We are losing money at our plant. We wish we were only 10% off from last year. But I guess things all over are tough.

Pro—Yes, sir, and are gonna get a lot tougher.

So the member shied away from the pro shop, went to the first tee, picked out a plentifully hacked old ball and glumly put it in the ball washer.

The incident aptly showed how belly-aching the blues scared away sales and probably ruined the afternoon of a fellow who belonged to the club for fun.

What the pros ought to be singing for the good of their own business and service to their clubs is something along the lines of a current radio ditty that runs something like, "I'll put the sun back in the sky; I'll teach the bluebirds how to fly," and so forth in cheering and confident phrases.

Somebody Has Money

As a matter of honest fact the sports business is not having nearly the cause for tears that many other industries are having. The jack is coming from somewhere. Babe Ruth signs for \$75,000 a year of somebody's dough. The pro hockey schedules paid out quite well. A few weeks ago your correspondent started out for the

Dempsey-King Levinsky pillow fight at the Chicago Stadium where all entrances were blocked with people wanting to buy tickets and no additional seating space available. En route to this exhibition that rated a poor second to a street corner contest between two truck drivers, the writer with extreme reluctance gained entrance to a speakeasy where other members of the party were to be met. The joint was crowded with people laying it on the line for terrible Scotch from the hielands of West 12th st. at a dollar a throw and bottled Canadian beer from the province of Cicero at an equal price.

Venturing into the company of people who go strong for amateur sports, a few nights later your representative of the common people counted himself fortunate to be able to get in to the wind-up of the basketball season at Northwestern university. That Northwestern-Purdue game was a sell-out two weeks before the whistle blew.

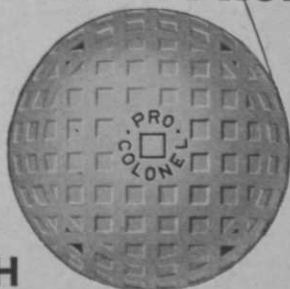
Obviously someone has money that can be lured out from its hiding place, but the way not to do it is to put on a whipped look and talk like all is lost save honor.

Maybe it will require a little poetic license for a pro to talk about business being fine in 1932, but if he must discuss business he ought to be an optimist even though it calls for undue liberties with the truth. What the player pays for is play, and if the play spirit is taken away by a sob story from the pro, there's no reason for the player to let his dough go.

ONE OF THE able pros in Michigan is located at a small club in the copper country. When copper business is sour it's not all of his troubles. His location also is a collegé town and that means the dough is played close to the chest.

Cheap ball sales by other outlets and free private brand balls cut into his sales until he started a push on cheap balls himself. He started a backfire on the private brand ball business in the same way the Chinese put the heat on Japanese business in China and he has the players lined up on this platform for 1932. He had trouble getting club cleaning signed up for the season, but made up by shop signs and personal efforts for cleaning at 50 cents a set. This, at the end of the season, resulted in his club cleaning income being up to par.

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