

# Smart Pro's 1933 Prospects Not So Gloomy

**T**HERE IS no special reason why the outlook for pro golf business in 1933 should be so dismal that any of the fellows should start crying before the battle starts. The year may be plenty tough, but if it is tough for the pro it will be because it is even tougher for general business, and the pro will have no occasion to complain of his fate or position.

Anyone who would attempt to do any forecasting for 1933, other than to hazard a mild guess it won't make much difference in 2033, is taking a long chance. But say the year will be tough; that only means the fellow who has the stuff will have to work harder and smarter while the other fellows are wilting because of inability to "take it."

First of all, there is the job situation. Never has it been sadder in the history of golf. Actually it isn't so much that some good club jobs are going for figures that can't afford food, shelter and clothing to a man and his family. The real sad part of it is that some of these jobs are going to unqualified but desperate men and boys who promise the club anything just to get signed up. Many of them may not last long, but in the meanwhile they are very doubtful assets to clubs that ought to have first-class men on the job to operate the pro department so it will be of definite value to the members and a positive factor in getting new members.

Regardless of whatever anyone thinks about it, a lot of jobs are necessarily going to pro-greenkeepers, many of whom are O. K. as pros but have a long, long way to go before they can claim to be greenkeepers. They are expected to acquire the tricky and exacting science of greenkeeping quickly, get up at sunrise to see if brown-patch has hit, supervise the course maintenance, teach, conduct the tournaments, provide sales service in the shop and then stay up until the night watering is well under way. These pro-greenkeeping jobs are work if they're done right and don't let anyone tell you there isn't a full day's work for two men operating the greenkeeping and pro departments of any fair-sized golf club.

One angle on the pro-greenkeeping situation that was brought forward for the first time the other day was presented by a prominent golf club official. He said, "I prefer both a pro and a greenkeeper because it keeps the competitive element in maintenance. A pro is inclined to belly-ache so you can hear it in the next county if there is anything wrong with the condition of the course. The greenkeeper knows that and keeps the course perfect out of sheer meanness toward the pro." This is a rather blunt way of putting it, but there's no doubt that the angle is pertinent to many cases.

## How About Selling?

Whatever prospects of delight there are in the golf goods selling situation are mostly those that the pro can see if he looks close enough. The manufacturers have taken it on the chin until their chins are calloused, but you have to say one thing for them, they are doing no whining. Golf now is a poor man's game because of the enforced liquidation of manufacturers' frozen inventories. What puts the pros in a good spot is that their stocks at the close of the 1932 season were practically exhausted, while the stores were stacked to the eves with merchandise that they hadn't been able to sell even with more cut-price advertising in newspapers than they ever had before.

The new lines are being pushed in the pro shops and when it comes to competition on low-priced stuff the pro is able to meet the prices of any of the stores. This condition has been responsible for making some of the fee-course and municipal course pros leading merchandisers of the field. Four years ago GOLFDOM counseled the pros not to be upstage about the pay-as-you-play jobs because those jobs were where the traffic is, and where the most lessons and merchandise could be sold by alert operators. Men who got in early on the fee course business and made the right sort of arrangements now have some of the best of the present jobs in pro golf. However, most of the fee course and municipal jobs have been temporarily

ruined by cut-price competition of pros themselves. Any fellow who will work for less gets the job, it seems, regardless of his qualifications. It does seem though, that the fee course owners will get next to themselves because it was plainly apparent in the 1932 season that the fee courses faring the best, financially, were those having first class pros who really knew the business of golf. It paid the courses to let these pros make some money out of the jobs, as then the fee courses made more.

### Competition Hard Hit

High rents, lowered sales volume and even that volume split among scores of new "down-town" golf goods outlets have put the sporting goods stores in a bad way. The practice of trick discounts to em-

ployees of large corporations, or the general distribution of these discount cards, has so reduced the chance of profits for the legitimate sporting goods stores that they are in a much worse plight than the pros. After a number of years of competitive enmity the pros and legitimate stores now find that they have a cause in common. The chiselers who work on the "buy it wholesale" lure and the hit-and-run sharks with their phony fire sales and clearance sales are injuring the pro, the legitimate store dealer and the manufacturer alike.

### Promotion Needed

In 1932 one of the few bright spots in the golf business was the continued growth of women's golf. Pro attention to this phase of the market is one of the best

**I**N an estimate of the "value of tourists on the hoof," "Western Advertising" gives the following figures of total expenditures by tourists compiled from data furnished by various community promotion organizations:

Northern and Central Calif. (Jan., Feb., Mar., Oct., Nov., Dec., 1931) .....	\$ 68,252,583
Southern Calif. (winter, 1931) .....	110,928,619

That total of \$179,181,202 in a depression year of 1931 doesn't make those banner year open event purses seem out of line as thrifty advertising efforts.

Chicago authorities estimate that almost 2,000,000 visitors will come to the 1,500 conventions which will be held during the Century of Progress world's fair in Chicago this summer and early autumn. It is expected these visitors will bring \$75,000,000 to the city.

Florida, by advancing the date of its \$10,000 open, obtained satisfactory results, Floridians say. Galleries were smaller, but the golf event and its publicity helped to attract people who came to Florida earlier and are expected to stay until spring.

Those facts seem to indicate that tournament golf even in these times, isn't necessarily "on its way out." What it obviously needs is the strongest, most persistent promotion it possibly can get, and that promotion must be done thoroughly and well ahead of the show.

The foregoing figures seem to indicate plainly that there is an opportunity to fatten the open tournament purses enough to attract the entire tournament golfer field. Even in breadline times people still travel and spend money, enjoying samples of the promised fruits of technocracy, when Eden will be restored and 16 hours' work weekly will enable us all to live as \$20,000 a year men.

Whatever doubt might have existed about the winter publicity value of the playing pros was dissipated by the amount of newspaper space devoted to the effort of some prominent tournament pros to finance additional promotion work out of their own purses. The various statements and comments got total newspaper space that compared favorably in volume, considering the season, with the space given the PGA championship.

Somewhere among the different opinions drawn forth by the tournament players' extra-territorial promotion activity, there is a happy medium that should revive open tournaments and exhibition golf: Looking for this and not making faces for public entertainment is the job for those of responsibility and competence in the various phases of the matter.

There's something to the explanation that the PGA championship, with its field of a few more than 100, accounts for more than \$10,000 of the PGA annual expense and to the reminder that the trip of the American Ryder cup team of 9 men and a manager to England will cost another \$10,000 this year. The playing pros are not pitifully neglected, according to this evidence. There also is weight to the tournament pros' statement that if they can work up more tournament money they are out to do it.

But, while the arguing goes on, the golden eggs are turning rancid and the goose that laid them is figuring on laying its nuggets somewhere else.

Maybe the public, like the ruined gal, pays and pays and pays, but there's not a hell of a lot of paying being done these days unless the layer is lured into it by steady high-powered teasing.

things that can happen for the clubs. The solution of the membership problem for most clubs in 1933 is women's interest in the game. Pro group lessons to women and children, free or at nominal prices, has been demonstrated to be the most effective factor in protecting and extending the golf market. The pro who doesn't pay attention to that detail of his operations in 1933 is missing the best bet for himself and his club. It's a nuisance in some way, but it is the soundest way for the pro to make sure of his job and to reach out after some more sales.

### Much Expected of GOLFING

One of the main reasons why GOLF-DOM's companion magazine, GOLFING, was started for the players and is to be sent free to 400,000 golfers during the most active months of the season, was to sell the players on the basic premise that golf is fun.

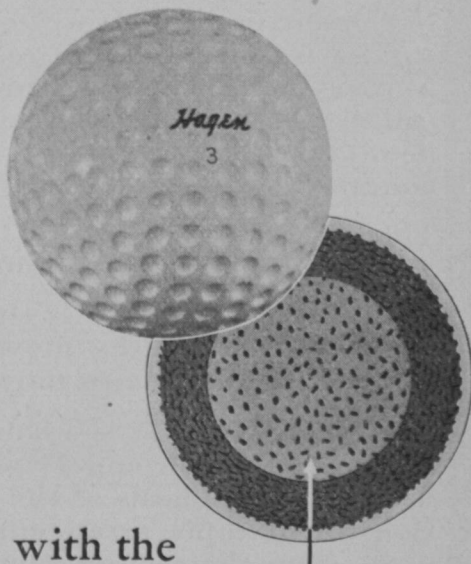
GOLFING, by reminding the players that they are successful golfers if they get enjoyment out of the game, even if they can't break 90, hopes to get people to play more.

The pros, club officials, manufacturers and dealers see the logic of 400,000 circulation arousing a livelier golf interest than ever has been maintained before when only about 100,000 people ever got a golf publication.

Another angle to GOLFING that will interest pros as it has the manufacturers, is what the bankers who are financing the manufacturers, have to say in approval of GOLFING. The bankers are not willing to tie up funds in financing golf manufacturers with a 5-month active season unless the manufacturers make use of the strongest and most logical force in converting the merchandise into cash and a profit. Pros and other dealers can readily appreciate that lines advertised to so many of their active players will sell more readily than will merchandise that puts it entirely up to the pro or dealer to push onto the market.

By the way, pros whose clubs have not sent GOLF-DOM names and addresses of their members entitled to receive GOLFING free, are advised to take immediate action. Lists so received will be used for no purpose other than mailing GOLFING. GOLFING'S promotion of the game is of especially timely interest to the clubs because of the necessity of maintaining club interest by every possible means.

## A New Walter Hagen Ball



with the  
"CONGEALED LIQUID CENTER"

Shortly after February 1st we shall introduce an entirely new Walter Hagen golf ball with a sensational new construction—the "Congealed Liquid Center." The great difficulty in the past with liquid centers has been the possibility of the center drying up in time. This hazard has been absolutely eliminated in this new Hagen ball. The center cannot dry up. The volume is constant. The elasticity of the center and life of the ball cannot change. Furthermore the weighting material in the center is constantly suspended in perfect balance assuring permanent accuracy. Send in your order today. Try the 1933 Hagen ball with the "Congealed Liquid Center." It will give you maximum distance—absolutely second to none, and is always accurate and extremely durable.

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