

MAKE GOLF HISTORY

Detroit Presidents and Pros Hold First Combination Business Session

IN THE Detroit district where golf clubs are making a rather rapid and solid comeback from panic days, golf history was made June 26.

A pro-president meeting, called by the Michigan PGA and having the heartiest cooperation from the Detroit District Golf association, was held at Plum Hollow C. C. on the 26th; the meeting being the first pro-president meeting in golf annals so far as is known. Presidents and professionals of all but three of the private clubs of the Detroit district were in attendance.

In the afternoon there was a president-pro best ball event. Tying for the low were Al Watrous and President De Visser of Oakland Hills, and Mortie Dutra and President Laurie of Red Run. Incidentally Laurie helped his pro with a handicap birdie at the 17th and Watrous was aided by the handicap eagle his pal and president knocked in at the concluding hole.

Jimmy Anderson, energetic president of the Michigan pros, was chairman of the evening meeting. The session was a pet idea of Jim's, but neither he nor any other pro had the hope they would be able to get so many presidents together to hear what the pros hope to do for their clubs. Jim's keynote remarks at the evening session were hung around the thought that the pros and their presidents had been partners in pleasure during the afternoon but at all times they were supposed to be partners for the pleasure of each of the clubs' members. Lack of mutual understanding of the problems burdening the presidents and pros was unpardonable in these days when every club had a serious responsibility of financial operation and membership service, said Anderson. He invited the presidents to express their specific opinions of pro merits or shortcomings so the meeting might have some definite benefit. Presidents Thom, De Visser, Beymer and J. C. Helferich of Detroit Golf, Oakland Hills, Birmingham and Plum Hollow made some pleasant and informative remarks, the tenor of which was that if a club had a pro who wasn't doing the club a lot of good it was the club's fault, either for not picking the right pro or for

not informing the man what the club wants done and cooperating with the pro in doing it.

Next Session on Presidents

The meeting was so successful and pleasant that another pro-president affair will be held later in the season at the Detroit G. C., at the suggestion of its president. The presidents will pay for the next party, the Michigan PGA having stood the expense of the first affair which was splendidly handled by the Plum Hollow people. Manager Jim Hill of Plum Hollow made everyone amenable to reason at the evening meeting by supplying a lobster dinner that would have drawn a prize at one of the managers' affairs where the host manager does his stuff in showing the other fellows how he feeds his members.

Alec Ross, veteran pro of the Detroit district, related a pertinent yarn about the pleasure of meeting the best people, in expressing his opinion of the value of the meeting. Mortie Dutra, acknowledging his welcome to the Detroit district, gave the assembly a brief and gracious earful telling of the aspirations of the professionals in club betterment.

GOLFDOM's editor, Herb Graffis, imported as the pro mouthpiece for the occasion, said such an event could only be possible where there were a lot of able presidents and able pros. A president's job is a thankless one and after being pushed around by everyone in the club with some sort of an imaginary or real bellyache, the president could be excused for not breaking down in tears at the woes of the pro. However, today the condition of many golf clubs calls for an executive thoroughness not vital in the past, and the president who doesn't have a close-up on the pro department is missing an important chance to develop one of the most active and strategically located factors for the solicitation of new members, GOLFDOM's man remarked.

Relating instances of how a good club could be accurately identified by observation of its pro and the operation of his department, Graffis told something of what the pro was up against. Citing some of the pro costs of doing business, the pro's short season, specialty business, limited market and their policy of keeping the mark-up on merchandise far lower than in any other specialty and seasonal business, Graffis presented the information that the pro's job was tougher than the popular

conception of playing around, wearing Kampus Kut garments and haberdashery, being pursued by good looking, weak and willing dames and operating a business with no overhead and all the customers flocking in.

Jack De Visser, Oakland Hills president, earlier had referred to the pros being entitled to applause for less complaining about sour business conditions than is heard from the average business man in other lines. Graffis grabbing this remark as a tip-off that the members highly rate

a pro who works at all times without crying, told of what the pro had to do before he made himself a first class pro. The general tendency to condemn all pros for the mistakes of a few is one of the burning loads pros have to carry, said GOLFDOM's editor. He also commented on club politics that frequently throw a pro out of a job simply because the pro happens to run counter to some selfish and powerful member's desires when the pro attempts to protect the interests of all members of the club.

DIVOTS FROM CLUB MAGAZINES

Out of the Bag, house organ of Red Run G. C. (Detroit district), A. P. Lauer, Editor.—“To improve all of our games Mortie Dutra is donating two half-days each week for play with members. Tuesday mornings at 9:30 is assigned to lady members; Wednesday afternoon at 2:00 for the men. Don't let your ability as a golfer keep you from signing up in advance for play.”

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Hyperion Topix of Hyperion Field club, Des Moines, Ia., J. A. Swan, Editor.—“There are 100 golfers at Hyperion who play under 90—something not found at the majority of clubs. I believe Hyperion could take 50 or 100 golfers and play any club in the country in a team match and come out winner.” Chuck Heaney, Hyperion pro.

Topix has far more news photographs of club activities than any other club magazine GOLFDOM receives.

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Fairway News of Ranier G. & C. C., Seattle, Wash.—A golf ball is given as a prize for each of the four best suggestions received each month concerning improvement of the club and course. Details of the membership drive are published. A full page of this four-page magazine is devoted to women's golf activities. Competitive calendar and results are printed. Space is given to aces made by members who were awarded pairs of shoes by a local shoe dealer.

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Backswing of Alderwood C. C., Portland, Ore., F. H. Young, Editor.—A one-page lively, chatty house organ from one of the liveliest clubs in the country. The editor expresses an opinion: “The rank and file of private club golfers simply don't have

much time for golf lessons during the week. A few sneak in a lesson or so on Saturday or Sunday. But it is a self-evident fact, proven by the heavy turn-over in golf club professionals who don't stay put, that teaching at private golf clubs isn't a very lucrative occupation.”

Brother Young has much more to say about the pros' position in golf but nowhere in his comment does he seem to realize that, at the last four years' rate of increase, there will be more women than men playing golf in 7 years. About 70% of pro lessons are given to women. If there isn't a pro right on the job for boosting women's golf interest with instruction and encouragement, the club is blind to one of the biggest insurance items—that of getting the women to come out.

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“*Putter*” of Indian Hill G. C. (Kansas City); E. A. Weishaar, Editor.—“The tramp golfer is a sponger, even though he may try to refute you with the argument that he pretty nearly always pays his green-fee; a sponger because he doesn't contribute a nickel to the many other aspects of golf which are as much a part of the complete enjoyment of the game as the greens, fairways and tees. * * * There are such things as showers, soap, towels, lockers, clubhouse, grounds, employees and supplies; all of which the tramp golfer enjoys but which the regular member pays for.

“The tramp golfer has become a serious problem for private clubs. He refuses to become interested in a club membership under any circumstances but will play around at private clubs introducing himself as a guest of a member or seeing to it that he has friends in various clubs with whom he alternately plays.”