

PICKED UP IN THE ROUGH

By HERB GRAFFIS

GOVERNMENT tax on sporting goods has been giving pros some trouble. The tax is applicable to bench-made clubs, according to a government ruling. Some of the fellows thinking that the bench-made clubs would rate as assembly jobs, didn't pay the tax and later were compelled to pay up with a penalty. PGA is taking up the matter with the government.

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PRO-AMATEUR schedules conducted by the PGA sections are getting more pro attention this year than ever before. Figuring that the event gives the pros a great chance to sell their cause to the public, some of the sections are altering the old practice of each pro bringing some hot-shot amateur from his own club. By spreading out the amateur field the PGA local officials are reaching more people to whom the pros hope to get across the idea that the pro is a very normal, hard-working and competent human who is all wrapped up in his business.

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HOW a swimming pool helps a golfing club is apparent from the records of Inverness club at Toledo. During the 60 days of last season after the Inverness pool was completed 7,400 used the pool. Of this number 4,100 were guests, for which a 50 cent fee was charged.

Social members at \$125 each were sold as a result of the addition of the pool. Many of these social members transferred to regular membership. Club business increased all along the line and Inverness at the end of its 1932 fiscal year showed a \$6,000 profit. The pool itself made a net profit of \$250 in its 60 days of operation.

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ONE REASON that municipal course play slumped so severely last year was because the courses did practically nothing to sell play.

At Portland (Ore.) Ralph C. Clyde, city commissioner in charge of parks and golf courses, is showing other park golf authorities what to do in acquainting the public with the pleasure possibilities of the public courses.

Clyde gets out a mimeographed letter

weekly and has it distributed at the municipal courses. The letter gives details of the tournaments and parties at the municipal courses, information on prices for play and puts forth cordial invitations to players.

In a recent bulletin Clyde tells how Art Callan, Portland USGA representative, is helping get the Eastmoreland course ready for the national public links championship.

As the result of work involving Clyde, Callan and Charles A. Rice, Portland superintendent of schools, special rates are given school kids on the Portland muni courses. The local high schools have boys' and girls' teams playing inter-scholastic matches. Players are eligible for athletic letters.

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THE DETROIT District clubs are exchanging credit information on applicants for membership. Now the fellow who leaves one club owing a bill finds it hard to get into another organization.

This new arrangement is a good break for the pros; many of whom have been victimized by members who skipped the club owing pro shop accounts.

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BOB COWDERY, director of the sporting goods division of the American Fork & Hoe Co., is making a valiant, thoughtful effort to keep the idea that a golf club can cost—and be worth—more than \$1.98 from going overboard permanently during these times when all the heavy play seems to be on cut-price liquidating sales.

With all the forced sales going on it is bound to be a tough job to get the customers to realize that a price on a good golf club sometimes must be at the point where the maker and the seller have a chance at a profit.

Bob is going at his job for the good of the cause by advertising to the public that the AF&H company's True Temper shafts cost more because of the material and method of construction, consequently the manufacturer of the finished club and the pro who sells it are warranted in getting more than they do for the clubs that have cheaply treated tubing used as shafts. Preservation of "pro quality" as

a selling point, rather than letting the market run hog-wild on cheapness is bound to be the main hope of manufacturers and pros for an early restoration of a chance to make some money. This is what the True Temper man points out to the trade. To the player the theme song is that a club with a first cost of about \$2.50 but with a soft shaft that costs the player \$20 a season in two-bit bets is no economy and no pleasure.

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CLUB-CLEANING was doubled this year by Benno Pautke, excellent business man pro at the Plum Hollow G. C. Net income from the club-cleaning was about one-third larger than in 1932.

Reduced rates on club-cleaning, payable in advance at the start of the season brought Pautke the increase. A special rate was made on man and wife club-cleaning. Advantages he cites over monthly billing basis are avoidance of billing for full month when clubs are out of shop for a couple of weeks; elimination of bookkeeping, check tax, postage; charge added before house account items mount; supply of early season working capital to the pro.

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PROS ARE aware that they are in the biggest sport business of the times. In the United States last year there were 70,000,000 rounds of golf played. In England and Scotland the 1932 estimate was 25,000,000. The American total of rounds was larger than the combined attendance of major and minor league baseball games, leading collegiate football games, leading fight gates, hockey attendance and the leading racing meets.

Close contact of the pros with this market and the pro realization of merchandising opportunities and responsibilities is a big factor in the further development of the golf market.

There has been far less complaint and much more business development work on the part of the pros since they have learned how pro income compares with that of baseball players. In the American association, for instance, the salary limit for players (with the exception of the manager) is \$400 a month for the season. Violation of this rule subjects the players to suspension for 2 years.

Pros have had the idea that all ball players were paid \$10,000 to \$55,000 a year, which is even wider of the actual mark

than the flattering guesses the golfers make regarding the income of the professionals.

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A MERICAN instruction is given highest rating in England; in fact it's rated so high that Golf Illustrated of London in a strong editorial on the British golfers getting "tuition-minded" tells its readers "there are just as many good teachers in this country as ever went out of it."

In an advertisement in the same issue R. Douglas Brook personally tutoring at the Purley Golf school, gives his former addresses as "Los Angeles, Chicago, Baltimore" and features "American Technique—Patient and Thorough."

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THERE WILL be no pro match between England and Scotland played this year at St. Andrews because of the British PGA inability to get permission to charge gate money for the pros' benevolent fund. Whether the Town Council of St. Andrews or the Royal and Ancient was responsible primarily for refusal to grant the pros' modest request is difficult to determine.

The match will be switched to an inland course where the British pros won't be able to get competitive practice for the Open, simply because they couldn't get the authorities to agree to let the arrangements for charging a gate fee be advanced from the date of the Open to the Saturday morning on which the international matches were to begin at St. Andrews.

British golf writers and the majority of the English and Scotch golfing public seem to have expressed the opinion that the pros got a raw deal after what they have done to make the Open championship successful. Competition in the Open for the last several years has involved a financial sacrifice that many of the British and Scotch pros could ill afford.

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GEOURGE JACOBUS, PGA president, in his latest official communique, counsels the master pros to give careful attention to the training of their assistants in instruction, merchandising, business management, clubmaking and other phases of pro department work.

Encouraging the boy by personal interest in his welfare and by giving him the opportunity to look in on PGA sectional activities are suggested by Jacobus as foresighted ways in which the master pros

can assure a solid future of the profession.

A great many of the assistants who advanced into professional positions "jest growed" like Topsy, and it's a credit to their native ability and eagerness for knowledge that they have made such good men. Some of the older professionals, who are graduates of the apprentice days, have done grand jobs of training assistants, but during the past several years the education of the assistant has been far too much hit-or-miss to be healthy for pro golf.

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"A VISIT to Medinah," a booklet written by Tommy Armour, the club's pro, is a lively and interesting piece of literature being effectively used by the club in its membership campaign.

Tommy really wrote the stuff and it beats the usual club promotion copy 10 and 9. Armour as an author has registered plenty strong lately. His yarn on "I Can't Win if I Try" in May GOLFING has been widely quoted and pronounced the best piece of pro magazine work turned out by a professional. Tommy, also without ghosting, turned out a distinctive series of instruction copy in which the instruction was tied in smoothly and strongly to tales of brilliant incidents in championships. This series appeared in the Chicago *Tribune* early in May and it aroused much comment. Many sports editors judged it beyond question the best newspaper golf feature that any paper has run.

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WHEN a pro does a good job of talking before any organization he is helping his club to get members and making customers for himself. Lew Waldron, pro at Brookside C. C. (Barberton, O.), has put on a Will Rogers combination of chatter and golf lesson before the local Rotary, Kiwanis and Lions clubs and recently before the Shrine. The Shriners recently were given the privilege of playing at the Brookside course for 75 cents a round. Lew got close to them by his tabloid golf lesson at their meeting and encouraged a lot of them to come out to the course.

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A MOST difficult pro credit situation is connected with GOLFDOM's classified advertising, so when we hear howls about pro credit we can counter with our own experience. The bills are small—about \$5 is the top. Many of the fellows who write

in are out of jobs but we take a chance with a lot of them, although our published terms on classified ads are cash with order because the rate is so low there's no profit in it for us, let alone any edge for book-keeping expense.

We clean up the unpaid accounts quarterly. The record for the 1933 first quarter collection letter was:

Got the dough.....	34
Answered but broke and S.O.L..	2
Undeliverable	2
Delivered and no answer.....	0

This credit problem could be cleaned up easily if the manufacturers would be more careful about selling, watch the delinquents closely and have the salesmen help the delinquents get straightened away before it's too late, and go after the guys with some letter that doesn't read like a pansy's rewrite of the ten minutes of meeting of the House of Morgan's directors. The pros' reaction (if any) to most of the trite collection letters is "what the hell" and you can hardly blame him.

At the root of a manufacturer's credit complaints there seems to be a deep and abiding fear that if he doesn't sell some deadbeat his competitor will. Well, let the competitor do it and pretty soon you will have one less competitor and one less credit problem.

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WEIRDEST tale of pro woe caused by the wet spring is that about Cyril Wagner, pro at Tam O'Shanter GC (Chicago district). North branch of the Chicago river overflowed, washed into Cyril's shop and sent considerable of his spring stock of clubs and balls on their way down the Lakes-to-Gulf waterway.

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F. McKIM SMITH, pro at the Downtown AC of New York has a little house organ called "The Down Town Golfer" with which he keeps the club's golfers feverish. Smith sells half-hour lessons for \$2.00; hour lessons for \$3.50. He makes rates of \$37.50 for 30 half-hour lessons and \$75 for 30 full-hour lessons. He signed up several members for courses of 50 lessons. Lots of testimonials from his pupils appear in his little paper.

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DON BUSH, pro sales manager for Vulcan, remarks: "The pros have everything the downtown stores have, plus intimacy with the customer and a reputation for knowing golf and a handiness

for the player. If all the pros would take care of credit, the pros would have about all of the business."

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AND FROM the advertising manager of one of the big manufacturers: "I think many of the pros are much smarter merchants of golf goods than are the department stores. We were putting on a sale at a big store. One of its officials said: 'We will arrange the stock nicely in a section of the store with some fine furniture and a country club atmosphere.' I replied: 'Not at all. We want this sale to look very temporary, so the people will realize they had better buy quick before the stuff is gone. No fancy trimmings can go with a deal where price is being made the big play or the public will suspect the price isn't the quick action bargain it is expected to be.'"

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ONE OF the best membership solicitation letters we have seen this year is that put out by Harry Flora, pro at the Portage Lake CC of Houghton, Mich. If you want to see how a live pro helps his club sell memberships write Harry for a copy of that mimeographed letter. The letter is Harry's own work and it's certainly a credit to every pro of Flora's type, who, unfortunately often are doing their great work for the game far away from the big ballyhoo.

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SOME interesting department store advertising has been done in Chicago on golf club sales this year. Marshall Field & Co. have had in some of their ads a phrase advising that the same special models also are on sale at leading pro shops in the district. M. L. Rothschild advertises a pro line of clubs as being discontinued by order of the PGA and inserts a note to pros at the bottom of the ad advising that since Rothschild has arranged for purchase of the entire stock, pros may buy from them at the customary pro discount.

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SOME HOT newspaper stuff on golf has been running lately. About the hottest was a Sarazen statement to the press service to the effect that Bob Jones ought to come back into the championships on the same terms as the rest of the pros, instead of holding out the Jones return as an inducement for awarding the 1934 Na-

tional Open to the Augusta National course in which Bob is interested.

Gene's rush of blood to the lip was killed by the wire service 10 minutes after it hit most newspaper offices but even that brief time was enough for some of the papers to print the statement.

Max Stiles has had a great series on "If I had it to do over again" running in the Los Angeles Examiner. Mac Smith drew fire by being quoted as saying that southern California has no great amateurs because it has only one great instructor. Harry Pressler in some snappy repartee names Fred Morrison, Joe Novak, Lou Berrien and himself as being homebred instructors he will stack up against Mac's pick.

Harry says if he had it to do over again he would aim to become a big playing pro instead of a famed teacher with thorough experience because the big name playing pros get the rich jobs. He cites Sarazen jumping from a caddie-master's job to a guarantee of \$10,000 a year after winning the National Open.

The controversial and critical stuff makes lively reading and may edge golf copy into the amount of space it should have in newspaper sport sections, considering that it has more circulation interest than most other sports.

HARRY KRUEGER, manager at Minnikahda club, Minneapolis, is handling one of the liveliest entertainment programs of any of the ranking golf clubs. The entertainment schedule is crowded with distinctive events and all of them are given attractive publicity through the club's own announcements and the society columns and rotogravure sections of local newspapers.

Fashion revues, floor shows and unusually good music for club events are featured along with menus in which Krueger and his chef do their stuff.

The job has been handled with superb finesse. Anything savoring of the circus would be ruled out by members of the Minnikahda type.

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W. N. STAGNER, pro at the Luling (Tex.) CC, writes a fine little article of the vital necessity of caring for one's health and spirits during the depression. It's printed in the Luling *Signal*. Stagner puts in a deft plea for offsetting the cares and dangers of the depression by joining a golf club.