

Pros' First Short Course Money Maker for Wide-Awakes

BYOND question the first pro business short course conducted by the PGA at Morrison Hotel, Chicago, March 29 and 30, marked a turning point in professional golfers' business operations and their relations with their clubs.

Harry Radix, president of the Chicago District GA, who is not given to hooie in praise or injustice in censure, sounded off on the character of the short course when he said:

"If club officials knew how intensely profitable to the club was their pros' attendance at these sessions they would insist on their men being present.

"Next year I suggest that you mail announcement of your short course to club officials as well as to professionals and you will have a capacity crowd in attendance because clubs and professionals can not be blind to one of the most valuable new developments in golf."

It is the intention of the PGA to follow up the Chicago short course with sessions in other sections, if possible within the next several weeks. The Chicago venture was an experiment launched by R. W. Treacy, secretary of the PGA and chairman of its educational committee.

A registration fee of \$5 was put on the event to cover expenses. Leonard Hicks, No. 1 guy of the Morrison, gave the short course room without rental charge. As the stenographic expense ran under the estimated amount the boys were refunded on the \$5 they put in, and are well ahead financially.

Rich Get Richer

That line about the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer applied to the short course. Many of the fellows it could have helped most weren't there. The attendance was made up of fellows in the better jobs who are handling them excellently and will handle them still better, according to their own admissions, as a result of pointers picked up at the short course.

First lecturer to tee-off was Max Brody, Chicago manager for Grand Rapid Store Equipment Co. Brody, some years ago was with Wanamakers and spoke as no

stranger to golf merchandising. He and his company have been responsible for the layout and fixtures at many of the country's noted retail stores.

He tipped off the boys to the fact that golf clubs are about the coldest items of merchandise that could be displayed. For that reason he advised club display in south light which is warm rather than in north light which is most suitable for the display of furs.

Give Merchandise Character

Keep away from the "basement sales" atmosphere Brody advocated because the pro shop business is of a professional character, even in those cases where a fellow wants to do business in competition with stores on a price basis. He advised that the fellows show fewer clubs so each club displayed will stand out in character. He also stressed the importance of displaying as much merchandise as possible on eye level. "Don't make it hard for the customer to reach merchandise," he counseled.

Instead of dead white inside the shop, Brody told the pros to use warmer colors, such as blue, yellow, tan, green and reds. He pointed out the effective use of color made at the World's Fair in Chicago as an example of putting life into display. The outside of the shop, Brody mentioned as being frequently neglected with the paint brush, landscaping, canopies, lawn chairs and inviting lanes. Attention to these matters he said frequently would overcome the bad location of pro shops.

Brody as a golfer said that one suggestion he could make to improve business for many pros was to quit thinking that they are too busy. He says the pros' customers are the busy men, running out to play golf, but they never are too busy to talk to the pro.

In an hour Brody delivered to the pros a load of definitely valuable information that will be extensively and promptly employed this spring. He told of the Grand Rapids men being active golfers and always willing to give the pros tips on their shop display equipment and layout without charge. If this Max Brody happens to show at any club where a reader of this is

pro, grab him and get him to look over your shops. He gave the boys a book on how to display to sell at Chicago.

Fields Help the Pros

M. R. Ely of Marshall Field and Co. gave the pros some valuable tips on merchandising from the experience of his outfit. He said that women now are responsible for about 75% of the apparel buying for men. This year Fields are featuring the ensemble idea in selling men's wear, showing in their advertising everything from the hat to the zipper BVDs worn by the well-dressed male of the species. Ely brought out that this ensemble idea could be effectively applied in selling men and women golf bags that fit the expensive matched sets instead of the worn, cheap bags that so many players now carry because the stores have worked bags on the cheap price basis.

He criticized the pro practice of putting too much in a display case. "Make it look like 'here is something special and only a few left' and you will sell more" advised the Field expert. He told about some mistakes his own great organization had made and in these frank confessions cheered the pros. "Always display your merchandise so it looks like you think it is the last word in value," he admonished.

Discuss Caddie Handling

Elmer Biggs, pro-supt. at Peoria CC spoke in behalf of more attention by pros to the caddie situation. The youngsters in the opinion of the substantial Peoria Dutchman, were sadly neglected as contact men for the pros. He advised supervising the caddies because the pro, rather than the caddie-master, eventually is held accountable for caddie shortcomings. Have your caddie-master touring the course to keep an eye on the performance of caddies, suggested Biggs, because occasionally the players, in kindest intent, ruin the caddies by failure to mark down their need of further education or correction. He strenuously opposed the pro practice of having the same caddie, stating that this established a bad precedent for the membership. The only exception he would endorse was when the pro used the club-cleaning boy. He advised running lower class boys along with the Class A caddies so the less competent boys could see how an able caddie performed.

Attention to the caddie situation Biggs said always puts a pro in strong with his

members and justifies his salary by extending his expert services to this important department of member service. The Biggs talk on caddie handling and the lively discussion following it alone was worth the registration fee.

Boys' Place of Business

Al Lesperance, in telling of caddie operations at Westmoreland, said the best results were obtained from caddies when the boys were acquainted with the idea that the club was not a playground for them, but a place of business. He expressed the opinion that the discipline caddies got at golf clubs was one of the finest pieces of training given to youngsters on the threshold of business careers.

The problem of the tough kids in Chicago was referred to by Tom Walsh. Walsh has succeeded in supplying excellent caddie service by not often criticizing individual caddies, but bringing out the faults in a weekly caddie meeting, or in special meetings if something serious dictates. He said that pros would get better results with caddie problems if they would consider the kids not as slaves, but as plastic material that could be moulded properly or tossed off the lot.

Spencer Meister summarized his caddie policy by stating he taught the boys to fear him, but to like him. Meister agreed with Biggs that when the pro is on the job there should be no work for the caddie chairman. Meister added that in addition to handling caddies at Aurora, he had not been too proud to cook, paint and do other work that gave the members an idea of his usefulness.

Meister's remarks led into John Miller's brief talk on what makes a good pro. John was pinch-hitter for Doug Tweedie of Spaldings. Among other things, Miller said that there are comparatively few pros who now ship back merchandise instead of paying for it at the season's end.

Advertise Your Personality

James C. Ewell, advertising manager of Wilson-Western, outlined advertising principles to the pros, loud-pedaling the idea of the pro build-up of the factor of value in his merchandise and service rather than continued attempts to compete with stores on a cut-price basis. Ewell pointed out that no store ever beat out another store on cut-price alone, so it would be futile for the pros to aim for a permanent victory in any price warfare.

In the radio broadcasts that pros have

many opportunities to give, he advised that special efforts be made to put across the pro's personality rather than confine the broadcast simply to an exposition of the pro broadcaster's ideas of golf instruction.

Advertising of a pro's personality and qualifications for member service, Ewell rated as the most profitable advertising that a pro could do. He cited experiences of large advertisers in warning the pros not to be discouraged because a little advertising didn't show appreciable results and impressed on his audience that pro advertising must be persistent to pay.

Help Pros to Make Money

D. H. Mudd, credit manager of Spaldings, told the pros that manufacturers have had to tighten up and put in budget and bookkeeping systems to help their dealers make money so pros shouldn't act aggrieved if the manufacturers insisted on them handling pro business in a way that would make money for all concerned. He said that 110 manufacturers of athletic goods now are exchanging credit information and that a pro who was careless about his credit or other business operations couldn't keep it a secret any longer.

Mudd paid tribute to the vast improvement in pro credit. More than 52% of the pros in the Spalding territory under his jurisdiction discount their bills. This is a better showing than dealers make, he added. The discount terms obviously have Mudd at sea. He said he did not think that a pro who did not discount his bills was entitled to 5%, and that in adjusting the terms the pro who did discount was entitled to the benefit of the discount the slow pay fellow couldn't earn. However, he remarked that figures on department store profits showed a national average of less than 2% last year, so whatever discount the pro could get, he had better grab for profits in every line were scanty.

The Spalding credit man referred to an alarming amount of money pros were beaten out of by members who resigned from clubs and could not be reached. He advocated some action between the PGA and a collection agency in collecting these accounts.

Mudd also vigorously spoke for a simple bookkeeping system for the pros and outlined such a system.

Treacy, Lesperance, Paulsen and Meister spoke on their instruction methods and policies in starting spirited discussions. Lesperance advised his comrades he be-

lieved that most teachers didn't realize how little the golf students knew. Guy Paulsen told of some of the pointers Mac Smith gave Fort Wayne pros after an exhibition in that city. Meister talked of the necessity of preventing stage-fright in the students. "Don't try to make them over if they are taking a lesson in the hope of beating some one tomorrow," the Aurora pro warned.

20,000,000 Golfers

Tom Walsh turned out in a star performance on the subject of group instruction. As the pro guiding spirit in the highly successful Tribune-Chicago Daily Fee group golf lessons, Walsh expressed the conviction that the group lesson idea could make 20,000,000 Americans golfers. Group lessons don't take the place of individual lessons, but are the greatest promoters of more golf business that have been discovered, said Walsh.

He gave many valuable pointers on the stage management of effective group teaching from his experience as chief instructor for the 1,100 golfers handled at his course class lessons last year. "Keep the wind at your back so your voice will carry and don't have your classes look into the sun," were two simple principles which many group instructors neglected, he said.

Dick Hanley, football coach at Northwestern university, told of his coaches' school that started with 65 students and last year had 450 football coaches and sports reporters in attendance, in beginning his talk on what the golf pro might learn from the methods of the football coaches.

Most pros talk over their pupils' heads, said Hanley in confirmation of a statement Al Lesperance had made earlier in the conference. He advised more of an effort to translate the fundamentals into the language of the people being taught. Pro athletes like to gossip, Hanley commented, and in this idle talk are liable to make slurs or show pettiness instead of realizing that whenever one boosts a pro athlete in any game he is boosting the other pros and the game.

Pros err in not listening to see how their customers feel, remarked Hanley. He said that the growing interest in golf was making it advisable that pros give their business more attention than ever before because the public in learning more about golf was becoming more exacting in its demands for pro service.

Alex Pirie recommended that the pros

make more of a play to the youngsters. The impressionable minds of the kids gave the pros who made themselves juvenile paragons great opportunities for coming out on top in the survival of the fittest deal now going on at top speed in pro golf. Kids classes he boosted for many reasons, not the least of which was that the parents can't afford to send youngsters for pay lessons, as they did formerly, and that the pro owes the introduction to the game to the children as a public service.

There is a serious economic waste in not taking advantage of the pros' knowledge of golf by employing at least some of it in course maintenance, said R. W. Treacy, in talking on pro greenkeeping. At the same time, there was a danger of pros getting in over their heads in applying for pro-greenkeeping jobs where they were not qualified. The pros have lagged behind the greenkeepers in getting after business education, said the PGA secretary, who cited cases of pros being anxious to handle greenkeeping jobs, but never going to the trouble of attending many of the valuable greenkeeping short courses available during the winter.

Shortage of Pros and Greenkeepers!

Treacy shocked his hearers when he said that there was a shortage of 1,500 first class pros and 1,000 first class greenkeepers in the country. He said he made this estimate not because there were so many fellows looking for jobs, but because of the lack of qualifications to properly handle jobs. Because so many of the club officials know nothing of the right qualifications of pros and greenkeepers, the education of unqualified men up to a proper standard, or their elimination, was a responsibility pro and greenkeeper organizations would have to assume for service to clubs and members.

"The pro is the golf host," said Harry Radix, president of the Chicago District GA in starting a brisk address. "If he makes every member feel as though he has been received with cordiality and good service, the pro job is being well handled." Radix criticized the displays in many of the pro shops he has seen and regretted his finding because he realized that when a pro lost a sale in the small market a pro has, it was hard to make it up. He advised featuring leaders each week-end in pro shop merchandising. The pros' deportment at clubs he considered as a delicate problem generally handled with great judgment. He counseled that a pro ex-

tend his interest to all members of the club instead of being associated too much with only a small section of the membership.

The importance of the season's schedule at a club in connection with pro profits and member interest warranted the attention of every alert professional, said Herb Graffis, GOLFDOM's Editor. Graffis referred to schedule preparation as a job every pro should kiss himself into as a service to the men's and women's committees. He cited instances of the increased interest of women in golf as suggesting more mixed events and particular attention to the women's schedule.

As good advertising for any pro Graffis mentioned the women's Western Junior championship possibilities. This event will be held at Park Ridge (Ill.) CC, July 9-12 and pros in the midwest would be well to begin developing juvenile talent for this event without delay.

Massachusetts Short Course Alumni Elect Wanberg

PAUL WANBERG, superintendent of the Weston (Mass.) CC, was selected president of the Massachusetts Greenkeepers' Short Course Alumni Association at the group's organization meeting.

Clinton Bradley was selected vice-president and William Nye, secretary.

The eight short courses under Prof. Dickinson have been attended by 140 men.

IF YOUR club has a swimming pool, a Venetian Night makes a great entertainment feature. Swimming, music, decorations and Italian grub give the event a gay air.

Manager Edward Newhart of Knollwood CC (Chicago district), who stages some great parties at this swanky establishment, considers the Venetian Night affair the highlight of the annual fixtures.

CONSSENSUS of manufacturer and pro opinion is that the pros' big day is coming back with the new code. The general idea of the codes is to equalize prices.

With prices equalized there is no sense of a member going downtown; quality and service will determine the point of purchase. If a pro can't show a plainly better deal on first class quality or at least equal quality for the same price, and on expert service, he had better get out of the business.