



JACK  
DRUCKER

## Drucker Looks for Trouble and Keeps Members Happy

By HERB GRAFFIS

**P**ROS being disturbed when members kick is an old story in the golf business, but the tale is rare of a pro who is concerned if he doesn't get complaints about any of those things that are liable to go wrong in the best regulated families.

Jack Drucker is the pro who looks for trouble.

That's a far more delicate job than handling trouble when it comes right up and smacks you, as it does often enough in this peculiar business of pro golf. You can't be obviously looking for grief or you'll stir up imaginary misery where it doesn't exist, but if you take a tip out of Drucker's successful experience you'll be a secret service man on the hunt for anything that might have gone wrong.

Drucker is the pleasant-panned, competent young Dutchman who serves the Chicago Golf Club, that veteran, aristocratic organization on the western output of the Chicago district. He came out from the east as a youngster to work as Chicago Golf's pro. He returned to the New York metropolitan district after several years at Chicago Golf and had the unusual experience of having the club he had left draft him back into its employ. This means Chicago Golf rates Drucker as AAA1.

Jack has those traditional Dutch virtues of thoroughness, diligence and good management of the dollar without squeezing those guilders in a death-grip in his mitt. He listens and looks and if he sees an idea in instruction or shop operation that looks O.K. he adopts it promptly. He is quiet and able. All of those qualifications make him quite a guy for any club's money. But they are qualifications that are shared by a number of other professionals at gold-coast clubs, of whom you seldom read on the sport pages unless they finish their Monday morning shopping in time to take part in the pro or pro-amateur neighborhood tournaments on their off days.

So, outside of tagging Drucker as a good steady performer and a credit to pro golf, I never figured there was much of a different story about the guy until one day I asked him what had wiped that kid grin from his face.

### Jack Suffers Rare Complaint

"I haven't been able to find anything wrong," he complained.

"Are you screwy?" I asked. "All Monday morning visiting with the boys on State street and Jackson boulevard, and nothing wrong? Keep it quiet from the rest of the lads or you will be kicked out of the PGA as being guilty of conduct unbecoming to a pro and gentleman."

"You don't get me. I mean there is absolutely no sign of anything wrong out at the club." Drucker was plenty puzzled.

After I had recovered from this unusual complaint I got some dope from Jack on his policy which I am sure will interest other pros, and probably will have a few ideas in it for officials, greenkeepers and managers. So here's the way Drucker looks at the pro job at an exclusive club (from this point in Jack is being quoted):

Where there are human beings there are bound to be cases of things not running perfectly. Even Robinson Crusoe and Friday had trouble on a desert isle.

Because there is bound to be something wrong some time, officials of older and higher clubs, being very successful business men, figure the best that possibly can be done is to hire fellows who locate the slightest indication of faults and correct them before these faults get serious. If everything was bound to run smooth all the time at Chicago Golf, would the club scour around and get a fellow like John MacGregor and pay him for his expert attention to the course? Would the club have hired Tony Faesen to manage its clubhouse? Or would I have had my job

when it could have its choice of a hundred fellows? No! If everything was going to be perfect all the time, Chicago Golf could have hired any punks and they'd be O.K. for the job.

So what does that situation put up to me in the pro department?

### Troubles the Members Don't Know

It means that I have to be on the lookout constantly to see that if any little thing goes wrong in the slightest detail I am there to catch it and make it right. A pro who is on the job can discover these things and correct them a lot of times when the member doesn't even know there has been a slip, but the pro doesn't dare—or shouldn't—take the risk of the same error being repeated. It requires a lot of watching, but it's worth it. A fellow has to do it to be the man a high-class club wants.

So I have to ease around diplomatically and keep my ears and eyes hair-triggered. If there is the slightest complaint to my assistant he is instructed to give me the high-sign if I am in the shop, or to tip me off right after I come in if I happen to be out of the lesson tee.

### Seldom Find 100% Wrong Guys

That old dope about the customer always being right isn't far wrong in the pro shop. Even if he's wrong he's right, because he is the man who pays. There are two things you can learn from complaints; either that your merchandise or method of doing business is wrong, or that your way of handling the man or woman who complains has been wrong. I have been in the pro business a fairly long time, and I have yet to see a member of any club where I have worked whom I would class as an All-American, 100% unreasonably . . . well, you know.

They probably exist, but the job of putting them right side up is one that belongs to the club officials, who will be glad to handle it for the peace of the community.

In pro merchandising this business of governing your operations in a way to avoid complaints calls for a lot of delicacy. At the exclusive clubs you can't have the least indication of forced selling. But your members expect—and have a right to expect—the best of everything and the first view of the good new things. You can't stock everything, so you have

to use a lot of judgment and be constantly shopping and investigating for fear the members may discover something that ought to be in your shop but isn't.

They often are shrewd buyers at these exclusive clubs. They are not tight and certainly not cheap, but they have to see value. If any merchandise goes wrong in even a minor degree, I have to make it right. My club inspection as the clubs go through the club-cleaner's hands is as careful as in some factories. I keep an eye on my club-cleaner and see that he is a well-trained and conscientious boy. He has to be on the lookout for trouble, and so does my assistant.

I hear pros talk about the troubles in the golf business and am willing to admit there are plenty, but our club members all have troubles in their businesses that in comparison don't seem to make the pro troubles too large for any of us to handle. The big edge that we have over most retailers is that we are handy when the merchandise we sell is being used, so if anything goes wrong we are right there to make it right. Customers of other retailers, in case of any real or imaginary fault, usually kick to everyone except the fellow who sold them the stuff. Then they don't go back to the same dealer to buy again, and they ruin that retailer's chances for business with their friends.

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With that Drucker had said his little piece and walked off with his team-mate and pal, MacGregor, greenkeeper of Chicago Golf. This combination is one of the most loyal I know of in golf. Drucker will argue in hot spirit if anyone might suggest Mac isn't the world's greatest greenkeeper and Mac maintains that if every club had a pro like Drucker the problems of the clubs would be cut by 50%.

I don't know whether the Drucker yarn strikes the gang the same way it hit me, but it looks to me like Jack's policy of looking for mistakes before the mistakes come to a head, and being prepared to handle them, is something that hasn't been mentioned before as the reason for a good club hiring a pro who knows the business thoroughly. That's something that is worth a lot of money to a club. The way Drucker handles this detail at a club where the members are quiet, well-bred people who are not chronic squawkers identifies him as a star trouble-shooter and an accomplished diplomat.