

# NIX ON THE NAGS!

By PAT J. CLANCY

**J**UST when I have about made up my mind that pros generally are very smart fellows something comes along to remind me that I should add a "but—" to my judgment.

In the last year or so this something that has made me wonder how smart some pros are is the horse race betting business. In Texas, New England, Illinois, California and Florida where there is racing some of our pro boys whose golf business hasn't been bad enough have pitched in brilliantly and helped race betting beat them out of some more business.

I call it a losing game for this group of pros because these pros are outnumbered. There are more horses than there are pros of this type, according to the old statement.

But, outside of being outnumbered, let's see why the pros can't win by playing the races that are held in their territory.

## Stooging for the Trimmers

You have seen, and so have I, pros at fee, public or the cheaper private courses in the horse racing zone practically running racing handbooks. This means that the pro hasn't been good enough to sell his players equipment or lessons. So he takes their orders for bets, which must be an unprofitable proposition for the customer, otherwise the fellows who eventually take the bets wouldn't be in business.

Therefore, if a pro is taking bets it gets right down to the pro confessing that he is shy of qualifications as a pro and has to hope for a living from his small and uncertain share of the race gambling polite larceny.

With the pari-mutuels, the two dollar bet comes within the reach of the people who haven't got much dough to spare. If the pro doesn't think these people would get more out of their money by playing golf instead of the races, that pro had better quit golf.

I have noticed that the gambling pro who tries to catch lightning in his bare hands by taking every two spot he can hold out on his creditors and buying daily double tickets, is always in the hole. Tough as the golf business is, it seems

to pay off pros in the long run better than the horses. If the pro has a gambling yen I will make him a bet that the time he spends studying the form sheets and telephoning the bookies would bring him more money if he spent it in studying and working to increase his pro business.

If these simple-minded suckers would spend one hour a day figuring out how they could get golfers to play more and buy more from them, instead of just hanging around the shop or banging around the course in dollar nassau play, they wouldn't have to hope for a ticket on the nose of a long shot to be able to keep up credit with the grocery man.

Horse betting, if you can afford to lose, is O. K. If you can't, then you are dumb to give it any part of the time and attention you ought to be paying to your pro business. Can you give me any reason why a pro by his own actions should encourage his trade to bet on the horses instead of playing golf? Still, don't you know pros who act like horse betting was their main business and their pro shop just a place to stall around until post time? The funny part of it is that many of these guys say the horses in their territory have put the golf business on the bum. What do those birds know about the golf business? They ought to learn it and go at work at it before attempting the horse business because that horse business has a hell of a lot higher percentage of its smart guys behind the poorhouse eight ball than the golf business ever put there.

## Suckers Are Starving

Legalizing racing during the last several years has shown up some unsavory aspects of that racket and should have tipped off the boys, who hoped to combine golf and horses profitably, that they are up against the lads who never give the sucker a break. In one midwestern state the first year's pay-off in lobbying, publicity and to other "in" boys was said by knowing parties to be more than a million dollars. If you think that million is going to go down in history on the red side of the racing promoters' ledger you are

**Running to Bet on the Horses  
Is Poor Business for Any Pro**

goofey. The sucker pays. Even the sucker crop gets a blight now and then. The suckers either run out of dough or, more rarely, get smart. Therefore it is sweet news to the racing racket to learn that pro golf contributes some bell-wether suckers to lead others to the slaughter.

The little corner groceryman sometimes is more philanthropic than smart. He lets the folks get on the cuff to him because he has a kind heart and hates to see the kids go hungry. But this small tradesman is an intellectual giant alongside the pro who encourages horse-racing interest at his club. The little groceryman along with the big people in the community who struggle with the current human miseries, are putting up a howl against race betting.

It is reducing the buying power of their neighborhood. That reduction of golf buying power apparently is something never considered by the pros whose enthusiastic and thorough attention to horse betting induces susceptible members to play their money on the ponies instead of the pro shop.

What makes the whole thing laughably silly if it were not so sad to those poor pros is the simple arithmetic. Say that there is a 10% cut on the pari-mutuals. That merely means that by the tenth race the folks, even if every one won, would be playing with only a little over 30% of their original investment.

Maybe that's not a bad idea, taking 70% of the customers' money in well short of twenty minutes running time, especially when you see figures like the nearly \$20,000,000 as the amount handled by the totalizer at Rockingham Park, Salem, N. H. during its 1934 season. It all depends on who ends up with the money. One thing that stands out clearly now is that the pros who are neglecting their own business for the ponies are not getting any of that 70% profit in ten races.

## LAUDS PRO

### Teaching Is Keystone of Pro Value to Golf

By PAUL HARGRAVE

I HAVE stood off and watched the exchange of verbal combat between various parties concerning the professional golfer for many months without feeling any urge to reinforce either side with my support. On one side he is upheld, while the other side pushes him down.

In my opinion, the instructor—or pro—is about the best appeal the game has for

the masses that go to make up the golfing world. Of course there are rolling fairways and luxurious clubhouses, but where would these be without a pro, the one man on the premises who can teach the game without necessarily having to boast of a consistent sub-par game.

The low handicap club member who is eternally willing to improve the game of the gentlemen whose locker is adjoining his own, means well but he cannot put over an idea without employing the "watch me" method. He hasn't the patience, moreover, to stay with his subject until the latter's coordinations of mind and muscle in some fashion emulate his own. Why should he? He cannot accept monetary remuneration for his efforts. He is what Webster calls an amateur, although he is may be referred to by various other names when he blows up on the ninth hole of a pro-amateur event.

### Male for Co-ed Teaching

That the game is best taught by a male instructor is a statement that would never be made by me without sufficient reason and basis. The golfing public and the citizenry of the nineteenth hole in this country decided that. Before I knew any better I used to wonder why a club that offered memberships to both genders did not retain the services of a male and a female professional. I was told that such a plan was once tried with disastrous results to the marital relationships inside the club, because the male members were prone to confine their training to instructions from the female teacher, and the female members, vice versa. Naturally, complications arose as complications will. Possibly that is one of the reasons why a club north of Chicago, which does not operate on a co-educational basis and limits its membership to men only, does not salary a woman professional.

I have yet to see a pro connected with a well-known club who does not embrace the good-will of the members at large. His business experience may not always be high enough to rate him an official's job in the U. S. mint, he may owe money to golf manufacturers and think they are dispensers of unjust form letters, but he is still the kind of a creature a man with a good social standing will pay money to for a golf lesson.

While the pro is not necessarily the highest paid employee on a golf club's staff, the fact still remains that the good pro has proved he is requisite, at every first class club.