

LESSONS . CONTRACTS

By HERB GRAFFIS

**Wintering Pros Forget Past Glories
To Theorize on Future of Their Jobs**

PROBABLY the most interesting development noted in pro ranks while talking with the fellows this winter was the persistence with which they kept bringing up business subjects.

In previous winters the boys have been in the habit of sitting around and fanning time away by reminiscing how they played certain shots way back about the time Columbus landed and giving all hearers hole-by-hole description of events they played early in history. This winter they seem to have been more inclined toward the thought that golf is a business for the pro.

Standing out among all references to business was the fact that almost all the fellows who did quite well in 1934 sales were fellows at whose clubs women's play was active. The moral of that is obvious—do everything you can to get more women interested.

One of the best known, soundest business-men pros in the country—a former National Open champion—came up with some remarks during a winter locker-room session in which there is plenty for club officials and pros to think about.

Ask Standard Pro Contract

Said this able young man in the golf business: "The pro is in defenseless position with respect to his job most of the time and maybe it's primarily his own fault.

"Many pros who have done well by their clubs have been discharged because of political conditions among club members and officials. If the pro has money coming from club members or the club, he can't go strong after what is rightfully due him or he loses his job. He usually works on a year-to-year basis and if he is canned, gets canned in the spring, the wrong time. You can't expect him to go right out in the spring and get another job. If he works hard some members think he makes too much money and they resent it. They figure, I guess, a fellow shouldn't be paid for working.

"As near as I can figure out, there is a possibility of correcting this condition to

some extent by having a standard form of contract in which the pro's duties and other details of the job are specifically set forth. Then, with both the pro and the club officials understanding exactly what is expected of him there can be no arguments about how the job is handled. Either the fellow handles it right according to contract, or he doesn't. If he handles it right, he is entitled to his salary and whatever else he earns. When club officials see what good pros do and all pros are expected to do, I think the officials will agree that pros are worth a whole lot more to clubs than most pros are getting."

The suggestion hit GOLFDOM's editor happily because he receives at least 30 letters every fall and spring from club officials asking what pros are supposed to do. Contract forms with clauses covering pro duties and pro-greenkeeping duties and with enough clause suggestions to cover all ordinary contingencies seem to be needed by both the pros and the clubs. In such of these contracts as do not run 12 months, it would be an easy thing for some "traditional" date in late fall to be set forth as the time for pro contracts, at least with the northern and central clubs, to expire. In this way the desperate plight of pros thrown out of jobs in the spring would be avoided. The clubs would gain as much out of this as the pros; maybe more.

Detailing the many duties of a professional ought to help to bring the pro salary arrangement back stronger, especially when it's weighed along with the details of what expenses of shop operation the pro assumes.

PGA Invited to Follow-up

The possibilities of standard pro and pro-greenkeeper contracts appeal strongly to the pros with whom this subject has been discussed. Formulating such contract forms with all of the clauses that might apply to the usual conditions is a job that calls for immediate and expert attention from the PGA, so we drop this matter in the laps of the PGA officials. The PGA will give their members, and all

other pros, as well as the clubs something that's needed if they work out such standard contract forms.

This same professional suggested that club officials and pros might well be thinking of a different basis of pro compensation in a lot of places. He was of the opinion there was much to recommend a \$20 a year per member basis for pro department services. The \$20 would be payable half at the beginning of the season to help the pro finance shop stocks for member services, \$5 in the middle of the season and \$5 about September first. The money would entitle the member to club cleaning and storage, minor repairs and four or five golf lessons. The pro advocated that the pro be on the practice tee Saturday from 11:30 until 2:00, and on Sundays and holidays from 8:30 to 10:00 A. M. and from 12:00 to 1:00, so members wanting a quick check-up on faults could get service. No regular lessons would be accepted during these periods.

He figured that the four or five lessons to which the member would be entitled by reason of his payment eventually would result in a decided increase in paid lessons. The lesson business, he argues, is the basis of the pros' hold on the market, on member good-will and member interest in the game. It needs pushing, he said.

Time Limits Lesson Income

While we were talking over this lesson business another professional at a good little club dealt himself in the talk. "My members think I make at least \$3,000 a year on lessons. The best lesson year I had was \$1,200. If they'd do a little figuring they'd see that \$1,350 is a big amount for a fellow who is running a job.

"Take your pencil and a hunk of paper. Here's the dope: From May 1 to Sept. 1—about 20 weeks—is your lesson time. You can't give lessons Saturday afternoons or Sundays or the members who aren't getting them kick because they figure you should be at the tee or in the shop waiting on them. Monday you are down-town shopping. So that gives you 4½ days a week or 90 days a season for lessons. Figure that you get 5 hours of lessons a day, and that is a good average at a club like mine. Three dollars an hour is all I have been charging them. It isn't enough, but remember I am the guy who is supposed to be making \$3,000 a year from lessons and you know I am no young punk as a player or a teacher. So there you have it: 90 times 5 times 3 equals \$1,350 and that's a

TO FAIRWAYS BEYOND

Hobart P. Young, former Western GA president, died Feb. 1 at Winnetka, Ill.

W. A. Alexander, 76, pioneer in midwestern golf, former USGA official and co-founder of several prominent golf clubs, died Feb. 9 at his winter home, Bellaire, Fla.

Dr. Charles Evans, 84, father of "Chick" and famous librarian, died Feb. 8 at Chicago, Ill.

hell of a big business in lessons at my kind of a club, and remember I haven't allowed for rainy days. I can't switch some of the lessons off on a good assistant because a good teaching assistant is hard to get and rates more dough than he can earn at my club.

"But, now that I've had my say about how tough the lesson angle is, let me tell you I'm going to give it a new twist this season. I'm going to give coupons at my shop on a percentage of merchandise purchases. When a member gets enough coupons he can trade them in instead of cash for lessons. It may be a dizzy stunt but I may make more out of increased shop sales, stir up instruction business and get my members playing better if this thing works out O. K. It might work out better for the fellows who haven't much lesson business right now than it will work out for me, but I am going to give it a whirl."

Hunter Issues Instruction Book for Pro-Less Courses

WILLIE HUNTER, well known Los Angeles pro and master instructor, has authored a fine little booklet, "The Easy Way to Winning Golf." The book sells for only 50 cents a copy. It has in it 30 pages of concise and sound stuff in which Willie explains "the methods of the masters." The book is ingeniously arranged to make reading easy and interesting.

Willie handles the following subjects: Common faults corrected; short shots, drive, backswing, long irons, stance and address, putting, grip, downswing, brassie and spoon, medium irons, trap shots, specialty shots, explosion shots, tournament tips and winning golf.

Hunter has turned out a grand little book for helping people who have no pro instruction service available and for stirring up interest in pro instruction and practice.

A copy of the book will be sent on receipt of 50 cents by the Easyway Pub. Co., 415 E. 6th St., Los Angeles, Calif.