

LET'S GIVE THE CADDIE A BREAK

By LAWRENCE ANTHES

Caddymaster
Philmont (Pa.) CC

THERE ARE several reasons why the caddie problem is a major 'worry' at nearly all golf clubs. Most of these troubles can be eliminated by understanding the conditions which cause them. To have an efficient caddie force you must have, first of all, a caddie committee composed of men who are alive to their duties. They should see that their orders are carried out, but at the same time, being just in their decisions. Common sense must be the basis of their orders, and the committee must be ready to explain in weekly talks to the boys the reasons why such rules have been laid down by the club for the caddies' guidance.

An efficient caddymaster is the second most important cog in the machine. There are more good caddies at clubs having an efficient committee and a mediocre caddymaster than at clubs where the caddymaster reigns supreme. The committee is to the caddie force what the "old grads" are to the football team. "Let's show them how the boys at our club can really caddie"; "Boys, we are proud of your work," and similar expressions at a weekly pep meeting mean much to the boys. This same thought expressed by the caddymaster would give the boys the idea he hoped they would caddie better so that he could get a raise in pay or a day off. To them he is their boss only so far as he transmits the caddie committee's orders to them and assigns them to caddie for the members.

The caddymaster is the mediator between two hostile factions—the caddies, who always seem to want the bag the other fellow has, and the members (and here our problem appears) who want what they far too often do not get, namely good caddie service. If the caddymaster cannot train caddies to meet the critical demands of the members, he is in trouble at the beginning; because, lacking the cooperation of his committee, he cannot bring forth the desired results. He can demonstrate all day on the proper ways of "toting" the bag, lining up the ball, and

all the many details that go with caddying; but, one thing he cannot do is to so impress his caddies with his importance that they will be inspired to do their utmost to carry out his instructions.

Colleges do not send the leader of the glee club or their Latin professor to talk to the team on the eve of its big game—they send in the old grad who was the hero in years gone by. "Club spirit" properly instilled in caddies and kept burning bright by frequent pep meetings will do more to eliminate caddie problems than all other methods combined. To what avail is it to properly train a caddie, if after all his training he does not apply himself to his duties? His knowing how does not help unless he is willing to give forth his best efforts at all times.

There Are Few Perfect Caddies

Eighteen years' experience in handling caddies convinces me that perfect caddies are born and not produced by intensive instruction. True, most caddies can, by efficient instruction, be taught to caddie satisfactorily; but your outstanding caddie is as rare as big league ball players are to the number who play ball.

Few caddies ever reach the perfect 100% rating. An average mark of 80% would make a perfect caddie force. Although all clubs have a few 95% boys, half the balance run from 80 to 85% and the rest, all based on efficiency, run from zero to a passable 70%. Our problem then is not so much to turn out the impossible, but to bring up the average to as near perfect a mark as is possible.

To accomplish this, proper methods in grading caddies and then instructing them efficiently are of utmost importance. After learning how to carry the bag, every boy should be taught to line up balls properly and to walk in a straight line to his ball.

With practice this will make him instinctively not only mark the spot where his ball comes to rest but cause him also to observe all unusual "signs" on the line to its new location. Boys so trained may wander off the line but they can easily realign their steps to the proper course. A ball so lined up is more easily found because the caddie has several markers instead of one.

It is the caddie's duty and to his best interest to watch and line up every ball in his match. The most tiresome duty in caddying is to help look for the ball you didn't see. By training caddies to watch all balls, endless time is saved, and players can get around the course from fifteen to thirty minutes faster, thus speeding up the entire course on busy days.

Many otherwise excellent caddies spoil their efforts by suggesting clubs to members. A perfect caddie never suggests a club unless first, in preference to attempting to help a bewildered golfer, he informs the player as to the distance to the pin. A caddie must know the length of each hole and the distance to the green from where his player's drive comes to rest.

I advocate that every course have a hole where caddies be instructed in gauging distance, markers being placed every ten yards from 50 to 230 yd.

At Philmont, thanks to splendid co-operation of the caddie committee (Ray Slotter and Alex Conn), we have an excellent group of 400 trained caddies for our two courses. They are instructed every week in their duties. All new boys, after receiving individual instruction, are placed in "B" class until they prove by getting three recommendations, signed by players on slips provided for that purpose, that they have thoroughly mastered the instruction given them and are therefore capable of fulfilling their duties as "A" class caddies.

"A" class boys, upon receiving complaints such as failing to line up balls properly, lagging behind, etc., are placed in class "B," and they must be recommended by several members to return them to their former "A" rating. Boys placed in class "B" from a higher rating usually find one round sufficient to show them the error of their ways.

To summarize—to improve any caddie service means to instill a loyal club spirit in the caddies, give competent instruction, and provide a proper means of grading caddies by the quality of service rendered by them.

Shop Insurance Vital to Wise Pro Business

By TOM NEWLOVE
Pro, Syracuse (N.Y.) Yacht & CC

PROTECT yourself against fire and theft at your golf-shop!!!! My advice to all professionals is based on personal experience.

Last fall, the night before my return from the Glens Falls tournament, my entire shop, equipment, new stock, 80 sets of members' clubs—absolutely everything—was burned to ashes in a fire of unknown origin.

Fortunately I have carried my All-Risk insurance policy with the PGA for several years and it certainly turned out to be a life-saver. The settlement made by the company, which was very fair, went a long way toward helping me replace my equipment, stock, etc., which otherwise would have been a total loss—a thing which none of us can afford these days.

Since my loss was comparatively small to what it would have been had I not carried insurance, I was able to give my club members who lost their clubs in the fire, a very liberal discount on new clubs. This I was glad to do, and it was appreciated by them since very few carried a personal policy on their clubs.

I should also like to say a word in appreciation to the golf companies who cooperated with me in sending out new clubs, balls and bags as soon as they heard of my misfortune.

My club—the Syracuse Yacht and CC—has built a new shop of stucco and brick. This is a fine investment for any club as it will not only be a protection to the professional but also to all members.

Regardless of the fact that the new shop is supposed to be both burglar-proof and fire-proof, I shall continue to carry insurance sufficient to cover my entire stock. One experience of this kind makes you appreciate more than ever the benefits of the PGA.

HOW many members realize their pros may not be paid much of a salary but have to make a living by selling quotas of golf merchandise that would scare most merchants in other lines?

If pros can get officials to cooperate in educating members in that matter a heavy part of the pro's merchandising and earning problems will be solved.