

A HELPER WHO HINDERED

By DAVE MUSSELMAN

WHOO should hire the assistant pro—the pro or the club? Club officials are justified in hiring the assistant only if they haven't faith in its pro's ability to make the proper selection. And if the club hasn't faith in its pro's ability to select the assistant pro, the club ought never to have hired that pro in the first place.

This is the story of how one club hired an assistant pro as told by the pro himself. "When I was notified that the club had selected me as their professional, I was also informed that the runner-up among the unsuccessful applicants would be my assistant. I accepted the position. I realized my new assistant had held a much better job than the one he was taking at my club. He did so because he was confident he could drive me out within a year or two. Until that year I had never been a pro, not even an assistant, and I knew little about the business end of golf.

At the very beginning, there were too many clubs mixed up and "loaned," and on four occasions stolen while they were in my shop. Golf balls disappeared from the players' bags. Golf ball name markers were hopelessly mixed up, causing damaging delays. The ink was doctored and as soon as a brand new ball was marked it was almost ready for the practice bag.

My assistant's excuse was: "It was this member's kid or that member's kid monkeying around while you were out giving lessons."

Further along in discussions of this nature his stock reply was: "If I didn't want a man working for me, I'd fire him."

I kept a day-by-day inventory and I knew he wasn't licking me financially. If I had 600 balls in the morning, sold 70 during the day, I had 530 when I checked my stock at night. My supply always checked. But at the end of the month my financial check-up didn't. A 25c ball counts the same in a numerical inventory as a 75c ball. But in a price class inventory there is a 50c difference. I found he took 75c balls and replaced them with 25c ones he had obtained elsewhere. A nice little case of substitution.

When I came to the club, less than half of the members would take the time and trouble to sign their names to the sales

slips. From what later followed, I believe my assistant made the non-signers pay plenty for their privilege of being care-less.

I did not gain their favor when, at the beginning of the second month, I insisted that they sign every time they purchased anything on credit in my shop. I did it for their protection, but I underestimated my assistant's ability. By having a member sign sometimes with a hard lead, a soft lead, and then an indelible pencil, sometimes sharp pointed, sometimes blunt, the original slips often couldn't be distinguished from carbon copies he turned in to me as originals. Of course, he took from my stock as many balls as "his" slips called for, and my ball sales increased all out of proportion with the actual play at my club. By "selling" balls in this manner to my assistant, I was getting my profit just the same as when I made a legitimate sale. Practically every time a member signed for three balls—he would be billed for six. And, a month and a half later, after they had paid their bills and had received from the club all their sale slips, although the totals might seem to be too high, still there was their own signature on each slip and an interval of 15 to 45 days to dull their memories.

Planning A Show-Up That Blew Up a Job

Why didn't I explain the situation to the proper club authorities? I did. Like too many clubs, my club also had two main cliques. The smaller one, the one which had sponsored my assistant for the pro position, now because they really believed I was trying to frame him (as he naturally claimed, and almost proved), "ganged up" on me and both my sales and lessons fell off surprisingly, and my position became unhealthy and insecure.

From that time I began to attack the problem in a logical manner. Since my

assistant was taking such a quantity of balls, to whom was he selling them? I pin-marked every ball in my shop, and later I discovered some of these balls in the pro-shop of a nearby club—the same club where my assistant was the assistant the preceding year.

I now held every card in my hand—every card needed to not only fire my assistant, but also to place myself in a favorable position to win a much better pro position for the following year. In my anxiety, I played it wrong.

Apprehended, the pro who bought the balls from my assistant claimed that, running short of golf balls, he had purchased a temporary supply from a friend of his—me. And to think that one of his best friends would try to frame him to get his job!

Of course I never did get those balls back again, nor did I fire my assistant. He took my job the next year.

Clubs in Northwest Sector Await Great Season

A BRIEF survey of golf clubs in the northwest made by Commercial West of Minneapolis shows them in fine shape with certainty of an active year for the territory's golf courses. High spots of the report:

Minikahda—Memberships increasing and now ahead of last year. Finances in good shape. \$35,000 swimming pool completed in 1935 proved great feature.

Interlachen—For past six months membership has been up to limit. Financial condition excellent.

Golden Valley—Big increase in membership. Pro-shop being reconstructed.

Minneapolis GC—Membership limit of 350 expected soon. Finances excellent.

Somerset—Near waiting list on membership.

Town & Country—Membership has increased almost to limit. Finances in good shape.

Northland (Duluth)—Membership increased by 60 during worst blizzard of last 40 years.

FIRST bulletin of the Ohio Golf Course Assn., state-wide organization of fee courses, solicits information to give the fee courses data for active prosecution of work delegated to three of its committees; legislative and taxation, play promotion, and construction and maintenance.

B. R. Darby, North Olmsted, O., is sec. of the organization which earnestly solicits membership and cooperation of Ohio fee courses.

INFORMATION from many central states clubs that nets have been installed in the clubhouses and pros are back at the clubs giving indoor lessons confirms the hunch that this may be a great golf year.

Along with indoor training, Beverly CC (Chicago district) plans golf instruction movies and lectures on the rules, to be presided over by the club's pro, Harry Hampton and his assistant Ned Jamieson.

A REVISION of the famous Massachusetts GA Caddie Service book for caddies and members has been made by the Massachusetts association and now is available from the publishers, J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, Pa.

The book may be secured for as low as 15 cents a copy by ordering in quantity lots.



Headed by their president, Howard Farrant of The Country Club, Brookline, Mass., Greenkeepers' Club of New England started off the 1936 season with a well attended meeting. A clinic was held on problems that already assure a busy and exacting year for the able experts who are responsible for playing conditions in the nation's northeastern sector. In the first row are the Greenkeepers' Club of New England executives. Seated, left to right: H. C. Darling, T. W. Swanson, James McCormack, Frank H. Wilson, Robert A. Mitchell, Howard D. Farrant, Arthur Anderson, John Counsell, Carlton E. Treat, Guy C. West and Charles W. Parker.