

"I'M STUMPED!" PRO MOANS

I'VE been reading GOLFDOM for years (said the small club pro). It's a fine magazine and worth a lot of money to professionals, greenkeepers, managers and officers. Being interested in my job and wanting to make it worth as much as possible, I read all the articles in GOLFDOM that have to do with what various professionals are doing to make money in their jobs. Yet the things those men do cannot apply to my position, which has some factors that have me stumped.

For instance, I have been in the business long enough to understand the importance of offering well known brands of golf merchandise in attractive fashion. I know the value of a clean, orderly shop. I know I have the personality to be a good salesman and to make friends and I think constantly of ways and means to make my shop lure buyers.

But consider some of my problems. I am professional at a small club located in a town of about 12,000 population. The nearest big city is 35 miles away. We have a membership of 150, but it's not active. The membership is filled with older men who are pretty well satisfied with the club and are set against any changes in policy which are needed to attract younger men.

We have 18 holes and it's really a sporty layout on hilly country. One nine has bent stolon greens and the other, seeded, but the entire course putts well when we have the money to spend for upkeep.

Now we have the condition whereby the course is not in excellent shape and as a result some of our more regular golfers maintain memberships at clubs in the large city near us. As pro and greenkeeper I have immense problems. I can't maintain a large enough staff to keep the course in good shape and I can't pay the men I do have anything but low wages. Why, I have men working for me for \$12 and \$15 a week; and that's for a ten hour day which sometimes stretches to twelve. I have to juggle my small crew around from mowing greens to cutting fairways and fighting rough. No wonder I get kicks that the greens are too long or the rough is too thick.

We have a clubhouse, but it's old and needs repairs and there is no money available for the purpose. We serve golfers' luncheons and sandwiches, but we don't

get enough patronage to enable any one to make a profit from the dining room.

Turning to the golf end of the thing, we haven't any really good golfers. Club tournaments are jokes around my club because I can't get any one to play in them. The tournament committee chairman comes to me and says, "Fred, I'm too busy to do much work on this. Will you run the thing for me?"

Baffled By Lack Of Members Interest

If I decline, he's sore at me and the chances are that no tournaments will be held. If I do run them, I get kicks from the membership about various angles. The chairmen of the other committees also turn over their duties to me, and the result is that there just isn't any member interest in what is done. I mean member interest of a constructive sort; let things go wrong and there's plenty of member interest!

I don't give many lessons because no one cares about improving his game in that fashion. My older members are interested only in playing once or twice a week in their particular foursomes, and if they can't improve themselves they just won't come to me for help. The younger players don't have the money for lessons.

Now when I do come across an occasional member who is interested in building up the club I have to sit by and see him lose interest for the sole reason that he can't get any one to help him. The next thing I know, he has either left the club for one in the city or he's just another member.

I don't like to complain like this, but I wonder if some of the boys who write for GOLFDOM have encountered problems like mine and if they've solved them? I would think the fault lies entirely with me if it weren't for the fact that my two immediate predecessors on the job had the same conditions.

I have been puzzling over these things all winter and keep hoping I'll find some ways to improve things.