

COAST PROS FIGHT CHISELERS

WILLIE HUNTER, Southern California PGA president, showed the boys how it should be done during the winter tournament season. Willie also is a star performer as a pro businessman.

He reports on some Southern California conditions in the golf business with comment that is worthy of pro thought in all sections of the country. Says Hunter:

"Major trouble of pro golf merchandising in Southern California has not been store competition. The stores do not do sufficient volume of high class selling for pros to worry about. They do not have salesmen with knowledge enough to put over golf departments, nor do they have the same scope as a golf professional who has the course at his front door to encourage clients to try out goods. As regards balls, we have had the cooperation of the principal manufacturers to prevent price cutting, and until a certain drug company started to pull our structure apart we have enjoyed splendid cooperation from stores in maintaining prices.

"I would say that our big difficulty has been unemployed or casually employed pros and so-called pros. These men have made sales taking a profit which would be impossible for the regular pro who maintains a staff and has an overhead to reckon with. Just as long as the manufacturers or their agents continue to sell people without a place of business this trouble is going to remain with us. Our PGA Section is working on this problem, but encounters quite a lot of resistance from some of the selling outfits who apparently want to get their sales quota no matter in what way it is secured.

Trade-Ins Are Pro Selling Point

"It looks like the PGA will have to print a blue book of its own to regulate allowances on used clubs. The habit of trade-ins is firmly established, and all in all it is another strong selling point for the pro against the store. Stores will not take trade-ins because they are too difficult to dispose of. Pros at some clubs can readily dispose of them after refinishing, etc., at a decent profit.

"However, the weakness of trade-ins is the difficulty of listing uniform allowance rates on different grades of used clubs. It is owing to this difficulty that the man-

ufacturers' agents will not nail price offenders even though they know definitely that chiseling is prevalent.

"A regular pro conducting his business with a fair margin of profit offers a fair allowance on turned-in clubs, but if his client is the type who buys for less no matter what principle is involved, he goes to one of the chiseler type pros, who increases the allowance and takes so small a profit on the deal that it is strictly unfair business. Our only chance to beat this kind of competition is by giving more service, and making our members and customers realize the difference in quoted prices is more than made up by the sustained personal attention of the club pro.

"Trade tourneys who meet from time to time on various courses in the district are among the worst offenders when it comes to chiseling goods for prices at cut rates. They should be leaders in the drive for fair competition, but they definitely are not. We are approaching such groups as we conveniently and diplomatically are able, but the PGA is not yet equipped to take care of enough detail sectionally.

"I believe the PGA will soon be, if they are not already so, in a financial position to employ a man on full time in each section for contact work in connection with some of the things I have mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs."

ED LALLY, pro at the Framingham (Mass.) CC, and his assistant, Dan McCarthy, have been keeping busy this winter teaching a WPA recreation project in the Framingham public auditorium under the direction of Louis Varrichione, Park Dept. recreation chief.

Instruction, which is free, is given in 20-minute periods, 8 hours a day. The course runs 3 months.

Among those taking all the lesson time available are 50 pupils who are complete beginners.

Lally passed that WPA hunch on to the pros through GOLFDOM last spring after his first successful venture of this kind. Some of the lads who had trouble getting through this last winter may now remember Ed's tip about how the popularity of golf lessons on municipal indoor recreation programs provided a good chance for pro winter income.