

HOW PROS GET PUBLICITY

By HERB GRAFFIS

ONE of the most significant developments in pro business practice is the smart use of publicity being made during the last several years by pros who have not figured prominently in tournament scoring, but who have been very active in the neighborhood of their home lots.

One of the younger professionals who is making himself known far beyond his home club, Ocean City GC, at Ocean Harbors, N. J., is Joe Swan, who presents a radio program on golf each Friday from 1:45 to 2 P. M. during a greater part of the year. Joe makes very effective use of a stooge in giving a serious but plain and understandable golf lesson on most of his program. He also goes into features of lawn culture telling the lawn-owner pointers gained from his golf course maintenance work.

Dozen Balls As Radio Prize

Each week during his season Joe gives a dozen golf balls to the person who submits the largest list of names made up from some phrase he gives in his broadcast. "Ideal Seashore Golf" was one of the phrases he used. It was a plug for the club that employs Joe and in addition to bringing play to the club often had the able young man's lesson time booked for a week in advance.

In addition to the broadcasts, which draws replies from Canada to South Carolina, Swan finds time to write a weekly golf lesson for the local newspaper. The fellow works on his stuff and tears up plenty of copy before he hits on what meets with his approval. Consequently his stuff clicks on the air and in newspaper. Swan, when this writer first ran across him seven or eight years ago, was an ambitious kid on his first pro job at a small resort club in Pennsylvania. He studied his job and learned from older pros who were glad to give an eager, polite and promising kid all the help they could. He studied greenkeeping, attending the short courses, reading all he could, asking thousands of questions of experienced greenkeepers and observing their work. They went out of their way to help him. Swan's latest educational effort has been to take a course in club and

hotel management from the Lewis Hotel Training School, to broaden his knowledge of club operations.

A kid like that is someone that golf clubs need. His club officials and members are proud of him and express their pride in pay raises. But regardless of the merit of his own achievements at the club, Swan has been smart in realizing the value of outside publicity that is attached to his name as pro at Ocean City. When he boosts his club energetically, he boosts himself. That's the real nub of the pro publicity proposition. When the pro's publicity efforts are closely tied to his own club then the club benefits from the pro service to the extent that the pro definitely is giving his club advertising value that perhaps was not contemplated when the pro was hired.

Macpherson Has Fine Radio Style

As an indication of what pro advertising can do, the case of the Hotel LaSalle in Chicago provides a good example. The LaSalle puts on a golfers' broadcast once a week and for a year has had this program conducted by Duncan Macpherson. Duncan was one of the pros the depression hit but instead of moaning about tough times he made good use of a fine radio style, wrote a golf book that went over in good shape and used his brains and energy in building up a good income through advertising. The pro stars knew what Duncan was up against in putting golf on strong as a radio feature and cooperated with him. There are thousands of public course golfers and near-golfers within the range of Macpherson's programs who are playing more and better golf because of interest aroused in the game by his programs. He not only has done good for himself and his employer but has rendered a very substantial service to the game.

The extra work of writing newspaper

pieces and giving radio broadcasts is not an easy thing but it's vital for the smart pro who realizes that regardless of how good he may be, he has to have his name kept prominent by advertising. One of the best, straightforward and simple jobs of pro publicity we have seen is the weekly column of "Golf Tips" written by Bob Steill for the Braintree (Mass.) News-Item. Bob puts in a plug for his club and gives the newspaper column a homey treatment that must get a lot of people over the embarrassment they may feel toward starting golf. Sports editor Lin Raymond of the News-Item gives the Steill column a grand play.

Pros Can Tie In

With Local Newspapers

Numerous times GOLFDOM has cited cases of pros, especially in the smaller towns, acting as golf reporters for the local papers. These bright fellows recognize the merit of the old adage "names make news" and see to it that plenty of names are mentioned. Golf is the hardest of all sports for newspaper sports writers to cover. Other games can be observed from fairly comfortable press-boxes and every press facility is handy. To cover golf a reporter has to wander over a great part of 110 to 150 acres and try to talk with from two to 200 competitors. Consequently golf has to do something itself to get publicity.

Golf competitions of a major character need no special push but to get publicity for the non-tournament pro is a real job that requires study and polite and thoughtful persistence. The job of getting the golfing public to become conscious of the work being done for it by the non-tournament pros is one of the most important tasks before pro golf right now. Much publicity has been given non-tournament pros as well as the playing stars through the school and public course lessons during the past two years. The publicity came at the right time to revive interest in instruction. Without the instruction emphasis the non-tournament pro in many places either had to start developing into a competent greenkeeper or worry about his future status.

The local publicity policy, especially in a city having several highly competitive papers, is a delicate one for the professional to consider; and about all he can do is to give all of them a fair, open chance when he figures that he may have some "inside" news or can help the golf writers in their coverage. The pro must

remember the sports writers or sports editor is an experienced judge of what is news and what isn't. That isn't the pro's job. The pro just has to keep trying to get the publicity he needs. Some of the stuff will click and after a while the build-up will get going.

As with all other important phases of the pro job, the publicity angle has its dangers as well as its rewards. In one section pro publicity was sharply cut as an indirect result of an innocent but in-expert decision concerning newspaper publicity. The golf writers had been fighting to get more space in their papers for golf copy but lost interest when pro beneficiaries of their efforts became momentarily unconscious of the work that had been done for them.

Radio is fast opening new fields for pro publicity, and it involves one of the toughest jobs the pro has. A golf program to click on the air has to be particularly lively and fast. Only about one of every eight of the radio listeners (to make a generous estimate) are interested keenly in golf. There has to be some "circus" and a lot of human interest in the program to make them tune in. One of the best radio golf reviews for news interest and "Winchellesque inside" is that put on by Stanley Davies of the Omaha Field club. Davies runs in an instruction feature during the season but there hasn't been to date—so far as we have heard—an instruction program by Davies or by any other pro up to the snappy interest standard of Stanley's locker-room chats. The field is still wide open for a sound novelty in golf radio instruction.

Meetings of local businessmen's clubs and societies of men and women afford pros another fine chance for advertising. If the pro isn't especially experienced or sure of himself as a speaker he can go along with another fellow who is a good speaker. The other fellow can be the pupil and the pro can give a public lesson. This stunt is worked in great shape by Ock Willoweit, pro, with Dick Johnson, Macgregor's advertising manager as stooge, pupil and ballyhoo man, as features of men's luncheon meetings around Dayton, Ohio.

RECORDS examined by Green Section authorities show that crab grass seed has kept for more than 30 years in soil. In one green the Section scientists found that 70,000 live seeds of crab grass were introduced by one topdressing.