

# DAN WILLIAMS' FIRST 20 YEARS

By GENE HAMPSON

**O**NE of the home pros who has done a great deal to raise the standing of the golf professional in the eyes of the men who support the game, the duffer, is Dan Williams, who on January 1 started his 20th year at the Shackamaxon CC, Westfield, N. J. Williams has had his share of tournament golf. However, he is of the opinion that he has finally found his niche at home and not on the nerve-wracking tours. The genial former caddie prizes highly his tournament clippings but they take a back seat in his mind to those which show that he has aided in maintaining Shackamaxon to the extent that members issued him an honorary membership in the club as a partial token of their appreciation.

None of his records means more to Williams than the simple fact that he has signed his third five-year agreement with the New Jersey club, something of a record in a game where five-year contracts themselves are few and far between. This contract plus his specially engraved membership diploma mean more to Williams than winning any tournament. Each new contract has brought an increase in salary which goes far to make up for the gold that might be gathered in tournament competition.

After 20 years on the job one might suppose that a professional has learned just about all the ropes concerning his chances to help the home club, but Williams insists he is still learning new ways to aid each season; and it is a tribute to his willingness to serve that he promptly goes to work on every new idea. Some of his activities may be a tip for other professionals or even club officials.

More and more the club officials have come to lean on Williams for aid in their various problems until at the present time it is difficult for the little home professional himself to recall the various angles of his position that have come to the fore in recent years. One of his duties has been to serve the club as official host.

Despite his many activities and the fact that he often spends 10 hours a day on the practice tee instructing eager pupils,

he usually can find time to greet some new member, a newspaperman or play a few holes with a member and some important guest. His friendship with the various golf writers of New Jersey and even New York has meant much to his club in the way of favorable publicity.

His continued affability has also meant much in the way of securing new members, several newcomers having joined Shackamaxon admittedly for the purpose of availing themselves of his instruction and friendship. During the depression years when membership slumped, Williams was one of the hardest workers in the membership drives and turned in as many new members as any one connected with the club.

When a nearby club broke up a year or so back, the cream of the membership there came to Shackamaxon telling old members that they were selecting the Westfield club because Williams had done so much for them at their old club in the way of entertainment, aiding them in staging exhibitions, etc.

## A Busy Tournament Schedule

Another activity to which he has been and still is closely identified is of course, the tournaments. Shackamaxon annually stages one of the most ambitious tournament schedules for members of any club in the metropolitan district and the professional's judgment has always been solicited in the type and conducting of the events. The presentation of special prizes by Williams has also aided in creating greater interest in the events.

In addition Williams has brought the members and their wives closer together on the golf course by sponsoring on his own a mixed competition of nine holes one evening a week during the summer season. He has relieved the tournament

committee of all the responsibility and work of this event, and in addition to inaugurating an interesting golf and social event, has added to the dining room's income by bringing members and their wives to the club at least one evening a week for dinner and usually cards afterward.

#### Chickadees Are Famed Winter Club

Another tourney activity credited largely to Williams, at least for its revival in recent years, is the winter golfing club, the Chickadees. This club is one of the few metropolitan organizations playing throughout the winter and boasts a membership of 50 persons with a women's club recently organized.

With Williams at the helm as director of the tourneys, the winter golfing body is a club within a club with officers, dues, etc. Each member pays \$10 at the start of the season and is given a handicap. Everyone wins one prize but only one, with handicaps increased to the point where the player can't help but win and then decreased so he can't win again. If the members fail to win he is awarded a prize at the banquet which closes the Chickadees' season in March.

This club has been O. K. in many ways. Not only has it kept the members' interest in Shackamaxon alive during the winter months, but it has also increased the club's winter income for lunches, dinners and drinks; and has meant some money during the winter for the caddies, many of whom otherwise might be unable to secure income of any sort.

The caddies, too, have come in for Williams' attention in the way of special tournaments for them, a chance to make extra money during exhibitions, dances, and through various other jobs. Williams annually gathers donations from the members and conducts a special Thanksgiving turkey dinner in the main dining room for all bag-toters.

At times when members expressed a desire to view some outstanding golfer or when publicity of the right type was needed, Williams has arranged matches between nationally known golfers. During recent years such players as Helen Hicks, Johnny Farrell, Victor Ghezzi, Ky Laffoon, Charlotte Glutting, Gene Sarazen and Babe Didrikson have trod Shackamaxon's fairways in special events, each time drawing large crowds.

Williams ability as an instructor has also meant much to his club with golfers

coming from many miles to avail themselves of his teaching. At times when such stars as Miss Glutting, Herbert C. Buchanan, Bob Lester, Gail Wild and others have accomplished good tournament results, Shackamaxon usually has been noted as the home club of the stars' teacher.

These and many other ways, too numerous to mention here, are the reasons why Williams is a popular man with Shackamaxon members and why golf professionals as a whole are a well thought of lot by members of the Westfield club.

#### WPA Has Put \$10,500,000 in Golf Course Work

WALTER McCALLUM, golf editor of the Washington (DC) Star, has secured from WPA national headquarters government figures on the extent to which public golf plants have received New Deal financial aid. The information secured by McCallum, which is of greater extent than that GOLFDOM was able to get from sectional WPA authorities, is summarized as follows:

In 1935, WPA funds totaling \$9,359,699 were expended on 306 public golf course projects. Local sponsors of the projects put up an additional \$1,454,436 for this work. No club dues or initiation fees are permitted for play on these courses and green fees must be nominal. In 1936, up to October 31, WPA had spent an additional \$1,234,428 and local sponsors \$242,398 in starting 62 additional golf courses. Total golf courses to Oct. 31, 1936, aided by WPA work—368. Total expenditures \$12,290,961—of which \$1,696,834 was from local sponsors and \$10,594,127 from Federal funds.

No WPA officials would confirm any statement that has been publicized concerning the number of golf courses involved in WPA plans for eventual work. WPA officials say such statements are entirely conjecture.

Cunningham Honored at Dinner—Election of the veteran Alex Cunningham as president of the Illinois PGA was followed by a testimonial affair to the veteran Scot organized by members of his club, North Shore CC (Chicago district). About 30 pros attended, each pro playing with three North Shore members. Club members presented a watch to Alex at the dinner that concluded the affair.