

# HOW SOME FELLOWS BECOME PROS

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**E**ZRA APPLESAUCE'S paw's farm is on the main highway at the edge of town. Ezra's done a little caddying. Farming doesn't make enough money for Ezra. So he mows a spot in the front 40, sets up distance markers, builds some tees and has himself a practice range.

Ezra puts up a sign: "Ezra Applesauce, pro." Why shouldn't the suckers believe it? Ezra does. Golfers and fishermen are much alike. They'll try any kind of bait and if it catches a fish now and then they don't stop to think that they might be doing a lot better.

Most golfers will accept playing advice from practically anyone, and if he's lucky enough to hit one straight long ball right after getting the advice he stays "sold"—for a time. That's what sets Ezra Applesauce up in business as a pro. Ezra may meet a golf club member or official who's strong in a club political situation and before long Ez is a pro at a golf club with widened opportunity for fooling ignorantly with the games of hopeful golfers.

Why it is that people invest in golf lessons without investigating the teacher's qualifications first, I never have been able to learn. Golfers will shop for clubs and balls with some degree of care, but when it comes to lessons, the basis of better golf, they'll go for almost anything.

Consequently it's up to the properly qualified pro instructors to protect players against the discouragement and extravagance of ignorant instruction. If—and when—this is done, the lesson business will increase greatly and many golfers will be lifted out of dufferdom.

## Pros Know Good Teachers

It is not difficult for one who really knows golf to identify a competent golf teacher. In the Chicago district, for instance, there are playing stars like Armour, Cooper, Laffoon, Loos, Metz, Orville White and Frank Walsh; others who combine better than average pro games with extensive instruction experience, like Bob MacDonald, Harry Hamp-ton and George Smith; and veteran pros

who do not play tournament golf any more but who know every detail of the golf stroke, like Jim Wilson, Alex Cunningham, Eddie Garre and Al Lesperance. Men of these types can tell in 10 minutes whether a pro is so qualified as an instructor that he has a right to take a pupil's money for lessons.

On that account I am sure that establishment of a pro's credentials to teach would not be a hard matter for the PGA. After that's done and a fellow is an approved instructor-member of the PGA, then why not provide him with a sign for display at his shop showing his standing, and begin to drum into the gullible public's mind the idea "accept no substitute" for a qualified golf teacher?

Qualified pros at fee courses and at winter schools can tell you that the problem of the unqualified golf instructor is getting to be a serious one. This winter I have labored at an indoor school with pupils whose games have been set into stubborn bad methods by faulty instruction. It's a tough job for me, or any other pro, to keep fellows interested in golf and get them going right, after they have been started wrong and are pretty much in the habit of error.

Instructor qualifications are not, by a long way, confined to the essentials of the swing. Almost anyone who has played much golf knows enough about swing fundamentals to talk about them to the extent they can kid the unsuspecting sucker.

## What Makes a Competent Golf Instructor?

The instructor to be worth the pupil's time and money, in my opinion, must have the following qualifications:

1. He must be a fairly good judge of human nature. Some policies that will get pupils in a receptive, understanding frame of mind won't register at all with other pupils, so the pro has to know his customer's frame of mind.

2. The pro must have some knowledge of the fundamentals of anatomy. His is the job to make better golfers of the fat and the lean, the tall and the short, the men and the women, the stiff and the flexible. He can't handle his job well unless

he knows enough about human structure to adapt the swing to the type of player he's instructing.

3. He must have a keen, analytical eye. There are dozens of little spots where a golf stroke can go wrong, and if a pro guesses around trying to locate a fault he will have the pupils hopelessly confused.

4. And, of course, the instructor must have a thorough knowledge of all phases of the game.

It's not easy to have these four qualifications. Every first class instructor I know has these four points highly developed in his instruction work but still is thinking and studying to develop himself in each direction. Some of these instructors consider that after 25 years or more teaching they have plenty to learn. But that doesn't bother Ezra Applesauce. In less than 25 minutes he paints his sign and nails it up and that makes him a pro so far as he is concerned—and unfortunately, so far as some of the golfers at large are concerned.

#### Dog-Fight Event Brings Sales Into Pro Kennel

**O**N-THE-JOB PROS are looking for events to snap up competitive and entertainment interest for their members. When they can put in an idea that has lively interest for members and increases pro-shop business, they have a winning hunch.

Here's the close-up on the highly successful dog-fight events conducted by Dan Goss at the Highland Park course, Birmingham, Ala. Danny gives you the dope:

"I have such an event every Saturday afternoon and every Sunday morning. It costs \$1.00 to enter, and say you get 40 entered—that's ten foursomes. I pick 10 captains, either 10 good players, 10 fair golfers, or even 10 dubs; just as long as all the captains are about alike.

"The captains' names are placed in a hat, and they pick their teams in the order in which their names are drawn. No. 1 gets first choice, No. 2 second choice, etc. Captain No. 10 gets to pick two men, then No. 9 picks his second man, then No. 8, etc., up and down. This makes the draw as even as it can be made.

"The teams play in their own foursomes, and the foursome with the lowest best ball wins. If there are six foursomes or less, the winner takes all—in merchandise. If there are over six foursomes, the win-

nings are split among the first two teams, 60-40.

"I keep a card file and give the teams credit for anything they may want, whether it be lessons, balls, club-cleaning, etc. The beauty of the whole thing is that I've got a lot of the boys doing business with me who formerly rarely came into the shop.

"Say Smith has \$9.00 credit and he's been wanting to get a new set of woods that cost \$25. He gets them. If we have 40 in the dog-fight, I get the 40 bucks worth of business, and out of that \$40, I may get \$100 more. Still another thing. I've got my golfers playing with each other and knowing each other. It's breaking up the cliques."

**F**OLLOWING the now famous 18 suggestions for pro selling, the Texas PGA supplied its members with 13 letters covering details of pro merchandising and service. The letters were drafted by George Aulbach, secretary of the association and Dallas CC pro.

They are excellent suggestions and a copy of the bulletin may be secured from Aulbach as long as the supply lasts.

**Women's Invitation at Aiken**—First invitation golf event for women at Aiken, S. C., will be held at Highland Park GC, March 15 to 20. A championship and two other flights of 16 will qualify. There are no entry or green fees. John R. Inglis, widely known veteran pro, is golf director of the City of Aiken's sports committee which is conducting the event.

Many women probably will want to secure invitations to the affair inasmuch as Aiken is a swanky sports settlement. Johnny Inglis will accommodate any pros who want to secure invitations for women members of their clubs.

#### Martin's "Fifty Years of American Golf" A Lively Classic

Dodd, Mead & Co., 449 Fifth ave., New York City, have published H. B. (Dicky) Martin's book, 'Fifty Years of American Golf.' The price is \$5. Martin has done a marvelous job in compiling a lively word and picture history of golf in the United States and his book is one that will be read with avid interest by men and women golfers, whether they be duffers or sharpshooters, veterans or beginners.

The book really is one that will score among the classics of sports writing and have a wide sale among golfers and golf clubs.