

I'M FOR A GOLF LICENSE

By BILL KLISH, Pro

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IN CONNECTICUT, a golf pro must pay a minimum of \$5 as a tax on an unincorporated business selling golf equipment. Recently I received notice that I would have to secure—at a price—a license if I sold sun-glasses in my shop.

That sun-glass license idea gave me a beautiful hunch. Quite naturally the matter of licensing the sale of sun-glasses was inspired by the opticians. Far be it from me to cry and complain when some fellow can put across an idea to protect a business that they think is theirs. I'm selling sun-glasses only as a convenience to players at my course, and there's not enough money in it for me to warrant the expense of a license solely for supplying a need that I suggest to a player by the mere display of sun-glasses in my shop.

But no store in our state where a sun-glass selling license has been bought, has been compelled by law to buy a license for selling golf equipment.

No License Needed

Anybody can sell golf playing equipment. And by looking at some of it bought by the fat, the lean, the tall and the short, the limber youngsters and the stiff elders, I am beginning to think that anybody does sell golf equipment.

Now I admit that a good case may be built up by the opticians for controlling the sale of sun-glasses. Eyesight is of tremendous importance. But, to a golfer, a decent score within the natural capacity of the player, and a disposition and pleasure protected by a reasonable immunity from bad golf caused by ill-fitting clubs, also is important.

But have we as pros, impressed this point on golfers?

No, brother. The opticians of our state of Connecticut are miles and years ahead of us. We see licensing of sales outlets going on all around us and see barbers licensed, and we talk to ourselves about how our work requires art and skill, but continue to let all and sundry sell golf equipment and tag themselves as pros.

Will we do anything about it? Certainly not.

But until we, who have license of train-

ing, experience and performance, to engage in the profession of teaching and supervising golf play, do get busy on some sort of licensing proposition, maybe we have no right to complain about the run-around we are getting.

Why haven't we pro examining boards, to start a licensing move that may eventually be taken over by each state, just as the licensing of other professional people is done now? Are we so jealous of each other, so distrustful of our veteran experts, that we can't set up pro licensing boards for the administration of our own profession?

As long as we don't take action on the licensing proposition ourselves then what can we do about distinguishing ourselves from the fellows who can break 100, but who lease a corner, install a practice range and put up their signs as pros?

Practice Ranges Give Tip-off

It has been interesting to see how well good pros have done with their practice ranges. It shows that competent pro instruction is recognized by the public. At the same time, it has been painful to have people come out to my club, thinking that they have been pro-trained when all they have received is really pitiful misguidance from a stop-and-sock operator who claims to be a pro. Plenty of those self-labeled pros at ranges are putting real pro instruction into disrepute. Let that continue for a few years with all the play the ranges are getting, and the genuine, qualified pros will feel bad effects of their neglect to take the licensing situation in hand.

I believe that the PGA might well study the manner in which the Red Cross issues certificates to life-savers. Maybe we have been so insistent upon getting dues-paying members in the PGA that we have lost sight of the possibility of exercising some

Butterfield CC (Chicago district) has solved the "trade" tournament problem by defining tournaments as organized play of more than 15 visitors or guests, in common vocation or affiliation, with or without membership participation, whether introduced or sponsored by one or more members.

The club prohibits "trade" tournaments because of the private character of the club and the desire of the members to retain the club's exclusiveness. However, like many another private club, the previous "trade" tournament prohibition had been evaded.

control over those who are not within the PGA fold.

Like many another fellow in pro golf, I have been at the game since I was a small caddie. I regard this game and my profession as a work of serious responsibility to the public. If I have the job of teaching golf to someone who hopes to enjoy life more because of the game, I bring into that job everything that I have learned from the fine men who have been my pro teachers, and everything that I have learned by myself and want to contribute to pro golf and its public.

As you probably do, I take a great deal of time and draw upon my knowledge of the game and the individual's requirements, to see that when I sell clubs, they are the best at the price, for the buyer's game.

Now do the over-night pros, or the sideline golf retailers, go at their golf operations in the same spirit or with the same qualifications?

Of course not. They can't.

Does the public appreciate the difference between them and those of us who have the right—for the golfing public's protection—to be licensed as pros?

Again, of course not!

We say to ourselves that the golf business should be ours because our predecessors and teachers built the game and entrusted to us its sound future development and protection.

What do we do to assert that the golf business is ours?

We can't simply make a claim of ownership and hope that the public will agree.

The public will think we want to hog it all, not for the public's protection, but because we are selfish and resent competition. We have to make our position clear and simple.

There probably aren't enough qualified pros to fill golf's need in this country. Still you hear all kinds of complaints about pro unemployment.

Doesn't that suggest to us that some-

thing's wrong, somewhere? Don't the ill-fitting clubs that are in your members' bags—clubs bought "cheap" from some side-line retailer—suggest that something's wrong with the important job of supplying players with correct equipment? That's a matter concerning the manufacturers as well as the pros, because if the principle of badly-fitted clubs is endorsed then a fellow might as well play with one old wood, 3 or 4 old irons and a putter, and never be in the market for modern, helpful playing equipment.

All of us who believe that a real pro's job requires training, specialized skill and a responsibility toward each other as well as toward the game and its amateurs, must do some thinking about the licensing control of golf instruction and golf playing goods retailing.

Play 18 Different Courses—Portland, Ore., saw one of its most interesting golf matches when Ted Longworth, Waverly pro, and Lew Railsback, amateur, defeated by a 5 up margin, Joe Mozell, Lloyd's pro, and Chuck English, amateur.

The match was played one hole apiece at 18 different courses within a 12½ mile radius from downtown Portland. Including transportation between courses, the match was played in 5 hours, 50 minutes. Longworth got 74, two over par. Mozell tied that figure. Railsback got 83 and English 87. The match started at West Hills' par-5 first hole and finished on the 225-yard eighteenth at Broadmoor. Most time scheduled for travel between courses was the 20 minutes between the Portland CC and Tualatin CC. Six jumps were made with only 5-minute travels between courses.

First prize for an ingenious house organ goes without any argument to the Forest Hill Field Club, Bloomfield, N. J. It has a circulation of one copy, and is read by every member and guest of the club. It's called the Handicap Herald, and is a long sheet that's displayed on the club's bulletin board.

It contains golf items and illustrations clipped from newspapers and magazines, and considerable exclusive typewritten material, giving news and comments on matters of club interest.

Any club that considers the expense of circulating its own club magazine too strong to assume, can adopt the Forest Hill idea and by some smart fellow using his head, typewriter, scissors and paste, turn out a job that everyone around the club will read.