

Check Up—and Hold Your Job

By Herb Graffis

CONSIDERABLE of the GOLFDOM organization's time and effort is devoted to trying to get jobs for pros, greenkeepers and managers, and to helping clubs select key employees. Inasmuch as this is a service of love, and results in a great many men getting jobs each year, we may be pardoned making certain blunt comments on job-getting and hiring.

We shall concern ourselves at this time with the pro employment matter inasmuch as there always is a jam on this in early spring; partially due to clubs not having definite understandings with pros at the close of the preceding season, and partially because pros don't call for a show-down in time to protect themselves against being turned loose at a time when the majority of vacancies have been filled.

Interviewing experienced club officials and successful pros on this matter of pros getting jobs, things come to light that are worthy of study by pros who are in jobs, as well as by those who are seeking employment.

The pro who is in a job needs to check up on his inventory of personal qualifications and performance, often as much as the fellow who is trying to sell services.

Specifications Follow Pattern

One thing that makes it tough for pros to sell themselves into jobs is that they don't know definitely what they have to sell. The boys submit, on the average, the following specifications:

Age. Number of years a pro, assistant or caddie-master. A scant reference to teaching ability. Maybe some reference to their greenkeeping qualifications. Tournament record (if any) in generalities. Married. Number of children. General dope on business record and credit rating. Member of PGA (if they are).

In very few cases is all this information, sketchy as it is, submitted in detail. Mostly, the boys say they want jobs and give few details.

It is not to be expected that applicants would go into any thrilling literary detail telling about themselves, but there are plenty of plain facts that need to be stated to club officials who have the responsibility of hiring the right man.

What the club official wants to know

first of all is the general qualifications as given above, although some of these qualifications don't mean a thing to the average official. What the club official really wants to know is "what can this man do for our club, and how do we know that we may depend on him to do it?"

More and more the good pro's job at clubs of all sizes is getting to be that of having primary responsibility for complete conduct of the golf department. The fellow is expected to suggest to the club officials what should be done to arouse more golf interest in the club and keep the members happy.

Ideas Are What Count

If the applicant can offer some evidence showing the right ideas along this line and the experience, character and personality to put the ideas across, then he has the inside track on the job. He sells a constructive, valuable policy of operation instead of merely a man to supply "pro service" which is a pretty vague quantity to a lot of club officials who have been having pro dissatisfaction—otherwise they wouldn't be looking for a new man.

In looking at the pro employment problem, one of the first spots to investigate is why did the fellow lose his last job.

Here are some of the usual reasons, together with questions the pro should ask himself:

Job so lousy the pro kept complaining. . . . The pro must ask himself if he did his damndest to make the job better. Did he snap up his service and personality and diplomatically enlist the cooperation of key members and officials, or did he give up and give folks the idea he wasn't interested? Pro study of his club's monthly financial statement frequently gives the fellow some tips as to how the land lies.

Politics. . . . Frequently dangerous for the pro, not only because of the possibility of changes in administration, but because a pro may get in the habit of playing with the same group and be the goat when other members plan to show that they also are part of the boss organization.

Selfishness. . . . Maybe the boy is tournament crazy and neglecting his responsibility to members in order to devote his time to his own game. You have to make

Attendance at Open golf tournaments hit a new high of approximately 500,000 during 1938, says Fred Corcoran, PGA tournament bureau manager.

every member feel like he owns the works.

Sloppiness. . . . Seldom mentioned out loud as a rap, but privately, plenty. Carelessness in appointments, attire, personal and shop cleanliness, are fatal at a club that is supposed to bring together the better people of the community.

Laziness. . . . The average member thinks that the pro has a very pleasant, languid life, so if the guy can't show some pepper on the job, get a live one who will take an interest in development of club activities and in members' own games.

Drunk and too fresh. . . . Those raps are diminishing. The pro who doesn't realize that there is an increasing patronage of wives and children at golf clubs, and conduct himself as one with whom the member considers a fit associate for his family, doesn't have much of a chance for employment these days. He's either got to turn straight or look somewhere out of golf for a job.

Bad credit. . . . Club officials look into this because credit standing is a pretty good tip-off as to business character, and is necessary to keep the shop stocked with what the members want in supplies. However, credit rating that may not have been strictly A-1 due to some circumstances not reflecting on the pro's energy, brains or honesty, is no rap. Many a fellow who is trying his best to pay off steadily on outstanding bills gets plenty of an "in" for that exhibition of integrity.

Indifference. . . . If the pro doesn't show keen interest in promoting the club, there's no reason to believe that the club will show any interest in retaining and promoting the pro. The smart guy has to have new ideas in evidence all the time.

Now here comes the amazing part about this inquiry into why pros are canned. Lack of ability is seldom mentioned. It's difficult to appraise teaching ability. Some fellows who are acknowledged expert teachers just can't get anywhere in teaching golf to certain members. The personalities don't agree, or something. It's too much of a mystery to be gone into here.

This point shows the tremendous value of personality to a pro. It's hard to put personality into a letter applying for a job. About the only way it can be done

is by being natural and when many pros get pens in their hands, they get far more self-conscious and muscle-bound than the average beginner is when he comes out to take a golf lesson.

For that reason, it is necessary that a pro hop, personally, onto any chance that presents itself for a job. If he has a personality that indicates he is a good man to be considered as a live, valuable worker for the club, then he has the best sort of an "in."

We have noticed, with regret, a reluctance of many fellows who have been given tips on vacancies at clubs in the smaller towns to get right onto these tips and see the prospective employers personally. The applicants send brief applications and then wait. The way that these jobs are secured is for some smart guy to write enough about himself and what he may be able to do for the club, and ask for an interview—at his expense and risk.

Nine times out of ten, if the letter tells a fair part of his story, the applicant will get a chance to tell the rest of his tale in person and sell himself.

These are just high-spots of what club officials and pros tell us—and what we've noticed ourselves—about the pro job situation.

The points are not bad ones for any employed pro to consider so that he will check up on his service in such a way that if his club had the job of hiring a pro all over again, he'd still be the right man they'd get.

Personality, Hard Work Build Up Small-Town Club

ONE of the outstanding jobs done in 1938 at smaller town clubs was that done by J. E. T. (Pop) Warner at the Glenwood GC at Rome, Ga. Starting in at a run-down club, and with no cash in the kitty, Pop devoted from 6 A.M. until noon each day to the betterment of the course. The rest of the day was spent on the problems of the players and in play solicitation. In less than 9 months Pop's personality and perspiration built the club up so one of its events drew more than 100 players.

His policy was to plug the small town golf club as an essential to the community's social progress and to the health of the local businessmen.