

# Get on the Air!

No golf publicity excels that a pro receives through intelligent use of local broadcasting facilities. An experienced sportscaster tells pros in this article what to do and how to go about it.

By Fred Meyer

**I**F YOUR name is Paul Runyan or Sam Snead, you don't have to worry about folks knowing things about you, buying equipment from you, or coming to you for lessons. But, if your name is Paul Jones or Sam Smith and if you're the professional at a small club in a small community, you have to use everything at your command to sell yourself. To hold your job you not only have to be a good manager and an expert teacher, but you must work in a bit of showmanship to keep your name and the name of your club before the townspeople. In fact, the ideal state would be if the entire community would think of local golf and you as inseparable.

As a sport commentator I have discovered in the past few years that there is no better way for the district pro to make himself known, and to promote golf interest—which is certainly to his interest—than by using radio. Every day more and more people are turning to radio for news of sports and sporting events—just check the program listings of the major networks for proof of this. Football, baseball, boxing, and hockey are now established sports on the air, both nationally and locally, and they have made wide openings for all other sports. Golf has enough general appeal to head the field, if you handle your part of the assignment correctly.

## Work Thru Sportscasters

The following may not be an exact outline as conditions vary in every community, but with a few adaptations it should be workable and help you keep that wolf away from the pro-shop door. First you should go to see the sports commentator of your nearest radio station, if he hasn't already approached you, and put all

your cards on the table. Be able to show him just what following you have already. Tell him why you want to make it larger. Explain, although this shouldn't be necessary, that the more people you and he can interest, the more listeners he will have—the more events there will be for sustaining or sponsored broadcasts.

Then have him arrange to interview you on the air. There must be some points in your life that have a bit of glamour; there must be some tournament that you have won; there must be plenty of drama that can be high-lighted. Remember, the ordinary to you is pure thrill to Mr. Duffer. And don't be a shrinking violet. Use every club in the bag and even the hand-mashie to pat yourself on the back!

## Start With Interviews

An interview, or better three or four, if possible, will plant the roots. From these roots, with a little ballyhoo, of course, will come three stems. The first is the old-fashioned but always popular golf question-box. Your sports commentator will undoubtedly be tickled pink if you offer to come up once or twice a week and take five minutes of his program to answer questions sent in on golf and golfers. Your word as an expert will add prestige to his program. (And don't be afraid to tell him so!!)

The other two are "Golf Lessons On The Air" and "Golf Gossip On The Air." Both may be run like the first—as part of a regular program. This gives you time to build up a following and gives you time to become used to microphone technique, polish up your language, and to acquire a radio style. And then you should be able to branch into a program of your own.

With that established, the dividends should start to roll in. Perhaps the concern for which you hold the agency at the club would be willing to spend a little money on you. Go talk it over with the boys that hold the purse strings. Show them that

you have avid listeners. The station will be glad to help you compile a definite check. But even if there is no immediate sponsorship—and by immediate I mean at least a year—keep at it. It might be a slight expense to you and it'll take some of your time, but it'll bring them to you at the club.

It's difficult to say which is better: golf lessons or golf gossip. Your own capabilities and local conditions hold the answer. The lessons give the people the idea that they are getting something for nothing. Of course, you give them just enough so they will come to you for the real thing. The golf gossip, by mentioning the names of local people, wins you a lot of friends. Say something good about Duffer X. Thereafter he, his family, all his relatives and friends are your boosters for life.

But don't stop there. In fact, it is only the beginning. Next, make arrangements with your local station for broadcasts directly from the club grounds. Here your first bit of trouble will be the cost, for remote broadcasts take extra engineers, telephone wires or short wave equipment. To defray these expenses there is the chance of sponsorship, your club coming through, or perhaps you and the station working out some deal. Remember, it usually takes a little money to make money.

#### Novelty Events Click Best

What to broadcast at the club! Oddly enough, my experience has been that the club matches are not as popular with the radio audience—your source of customers and new players—as are the novelty events. One of the first things you want to arrange is a hole-in-one tournament, open to everybody in the district. To broadcast a portion of the event is a "natural." People who have already shot are listening to compare scores, and usually others will be at the same radio; some are interested to see how friends have fared, others are just interested. Spread it out over several days, if possible, and keep the time on the air short.

Last year an Olean (N.Y.) Club and Station WHDL worked together on a very successful hole-in-one tournament. The pro and myself took turns telling the listeners who was shooting and what the result was. We would "bet" on each contestant, and that added more interest as we were both well known in local golf circles.

Other novelty tournaments that lend themselves to broadcasting are driving

A local tournament that's bound to be copied extensively this year, was promoted by Parke Carroll, sports editor of the Kansas City Journal-Post, last season.

It was a pro-amateur team match bringing into competition 10 of the district's foremost pros against 10 amateurs. The amateurs won, 6 matches to 4. The crowd was 4,000.

A curtain raising demonstration was given by Clarence Yockey using 100-year-old clubs, and Bunny Torpey using 50-year-old clubs, vs. Harry Railsback using hickory shaft clubs, and Leland Gibson using a modern 14-club set.

The event's a swell one to put on for some charity.

contests, putting contests, and children's matches. In brief, most games played with a golf club and a golf ball generally have a "twist" to them, are usually humorous, and can be aired.

A word about tournaments! If you do broadcast one, be sure that it and the broadcasting of it are given plenty of ballyhoo beforehand. "Big" matches have the habit of falling dead on the air, and you can't afford that. Unless one of the country's major events comes to your club, forget the detailed description of the whole affair. Better to set up a microphone at the 18th hole and describe what happens there. Interview—and do this yourself, if you possibly can find the time—the incoming players, get their scores, compare them with others, and give general news about the tournament. Again, keep it brief and just hit the high-spots. Get a group of short (five or ten minutes) spots on the air and forget about a straight hour or so.

O. K., Mr. Pros, take it away. And remember, if you need any more suggestions or details, drop me a line—I'll be glad to help out any way I can.

**Copy the Docs**—Lew Waldron, Mohawk CC (Chicago district) pro, suggests that the bedside manners of doctors are worth studying as an element in resultful golf instruction. "Some doctors," says Lew, "say a few words to the patient and the patient becomes confident he's going to get well. Other doctors may have an unfortunate manner that makes the patient feel as though the situation were so hopelessly serious there's no use of the patient trying to help himself." Waldron counsels against the use of technical terms such as "open and shut face, pronation" and even, in some cases "pivoting" in the instruction of the average golfer. "Might as well talk to them in Sanskrit for all they can make out of it," reflects Lew.