

The Pro Examines His Business

By Don Young, Pro,
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[In Two Parts: Part One]

ON a day five years ago I dropped in to see my friend Ted Blayton, pro at that beautiful layout—Two Oaks. Having not seen Ted for several years, I was looking forward to a few hours pleasant visit with him. Ted is a first-class man. He's a grand teacher, a fine merchandise man, and a wonderful builder of club enthusiasm. He is also a terror for work, and a few hours with Ted always exhilarated me. So I was surprised no little to find my friend sitting disconsolately at his desk, his hair ruffled, a bitter look in his eye, and scribbled bits of scratch pads scattered about. There was also a stack of unpaid bills.

"Hello, you old bogey-buster," I greeted him. Ted glared at me and snorted, "It's just another pro."

I sat down and waited. No use pushing Ted. When he gets ready, he'll talk—not before. But this day he seemed content to steep in his own misery and stare at the floor. Finally I prodded him.

"Well, spill it," I urged. "Income tax?"

Ted swung 'round at me and actually bared his teeth. "Income tax!" he exploded. "Income tax! Of all the jack-assical remarks."

With one swoop he cleared the desk of bills, scratch pads, and all other odds and ends. A kick sent the waste basket clattering against the opposite wall. Emphasizing his remarks with a big clenched fist, he declared fervently:

"Okay. I'll spill it!"

And spill it he did. The following, as well as I can recollect, was Ted Blayton's story.

I am a golf professional. At least I consider myself one and am recognized as such by my friends, my business associates, and my professional affiliations.

For more years than I care to think about I've banged along at this game, devoting myself to my job in what is accepted as the progressive professional manner. I think I'm a good teacher—at least my results merit such an assumption. Anyway, I look after my job with all the enthusiasm I can muster. I keep

the club handicaps, run off a well-balanced playing program, and what equipment I sell fits the person buying it. I do more than my part toward keeping the membership roster filled, organize and conduct innumerable club activities, and encourage youngsters to take up the game by giving free group instruction and taking a real personal interest in their golfing welfare. I also perform more than my share of the hundred-and-one odd duties that must be performed around a golf club, even though they may not come under the heading of a golf pro's job.

I give free playing tips to John Jones who has just purchased a new set of clubs (of the same make I have in my shop) from a wholesale catalogue. The clubs don't fit Jones. But I give the free tips in as friendly a manner as possible, and smile while doing so. If the free tips don't happen to help Jones' game, you can bet your bottom dollar it will not be the fault of the clubs—because the catalogue said those weapons were sure-fire for scoring improvement. No, I'll just be a damn poor instructor—for nothing.

When Bill Smith comes into my shop with a dozen "Blair's Cider Vinegar" balls under his arm, which he purchased at a chain grocery, I run 'em through the marker for him and ask how's he hittin' 'em and is his wife's asthma any better. Bill grins sheepishly and guesses they're both about the same. And howls like an Indian when he comes in because some guy out on the course popped him in the seat of the pants with a brand new 788 out of my shop. Why don't I do something about such people? I could at least teach 'em the courtesies of the game!

Alex McWhacky wants to know whyinell I don't do something about that brown-patch on No. 16. McWhacky is on the Board of Directors but he hasn't attended a meeting for over a year. Consequently, he has forgotten I have nothing to do with upkeep matters, although he helped write my contract. He does know, however, that he has a standing Thursday afternoon date with Elmer Oofenbach and Elmer hasn't shown up. Why didn't I

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Off your feed?



GET OUT AND PLAY

GOLF



Lakeside Golf Course
GRAND AVE. AT LAKEVIEW RD., TOLEDO

TODAY IT'S GOLF FOR HEALTH AND SPORT

Office got you down?



GET OUT AND PLAY

GOLF



Lakeside Golf Course
GRAND AVE. AT LAKEVIEW RD., TOLEDO

BE SMART • KEEP FIT WITH GOLF

WOMEN

**BE active
KEEP
attractive!**



GET OUT AND PLAY

GOLF



Lakeside Golf Course
GRAND AVE. AT LAKEVIEW RD., TOLEDO

Response to the National Golf Foundation's recent offer to supply daily fee course operators with a series of advertising posters for the purpose of stimulating play on their courses, was so great that a re-run of posters in now "in the works", and this time, municipal courses are being given the opportunity to order the "personalized", three-color posters.

The three posters, illustrated above, measure 11x16 inches, are made by Colorgraphic process in three attractive colors, and on good quality 15-ply poster-board. The fact that, for the first time, the great majority, of "pay as you play" courses find the cost of such posters within their budget, whereas heretofore, the price has been prohibitive, accounts for the popularity of the offer.

A survey showed the need of advertising to create more daily fee golf customers. High printing costs, due to the more or less limited quantities a course owner could use, had always put posters out of the question for most courses. Only by large run production could effective advertising posters be made available at a low cost. The Foundation thus overcame this obstacle by underwriting the series of posters.

Each poster in the series bears the name and address of the course in bold lettering, in the quantities ordered. This will appear where the name "Lakeside Golf Course" is imprinted on the samples above. If you have not received your order blank for the posters, address your inquiry immediately to the National Golf Foundation, 14 E. Jackson Blvd., Chicago. The offer will remain open for a limited time only.

telephone Elmer when he didn't show up by one o'clock?

I look after the Friday tournaments for the ladies (bless 'em!) and give them an after-luncheon instruction lecture about three times a season. The girls charge fifty cents for their Friday tournament affairs, and I relieve the committee of a burden by collecting the money and handling the tournament. They show their appreciation of this service by spending the amount with me for ball prizes. (When they buy their club championship trophy, however, they get it from a downtown jeweler whose wife is chairman of the Flinch and Domino Committee.)

Well, I do this and that—and this and that and this and that. As a club pro you will understand. It's just part of the game. I take the bitter with the sweet—even if the bitter has given me stomach ulcers. And like it!

I belong to the national association that represents the boys who make their bread and butter out of golf. It costs me thirty dollars a year. Whatever other local or state associations that are organized to help the game, get my dough and my support. And gladly. I support the State Open, the Pro-Amateur event of the State

Amateur, the State Professional, and all other events that are, or should be, good for the game as a whole. My chances of winning a dollar at any of these is so remote as to be almost nil. I'm too busy trying to make a living to retain whatever playing ability I may have at one time possessed.

I start to work the first of March each season and stick on the job twelve hours every week day, Sunday and holiday for nine months. The other three months I spend worrying how to get along until the next March.

Anyhow, at the end of the nine months I get out the old books, pay up remaining bills, (I hope) figure out my profits, (if any) and wonder just how it is possible for a man to put in so many hours through 275 days and have so little to show for it.

In other words, my fine-feathered friend, I've devoted most of my life to this game, all of my enthusiasm, and each season that rolls around I see the relative importance of my profession to the game slip further and further into the background.

The public gives me a small salary (on which I cannot exist) to be on the job

Bright boy, this Pat Markovich at the Carquinez GC, Giant, Calif. In "The Approach," the club's lively little monthly, Pat has an item which reads:

This month I am happy to announce that plans are progressing rapidly on the formation of a class for ladies with a 20 handicap or over. Group lessons will be given to interested ladies for the modest charge of 25 cents apiece. Instruction will be given one hour or more each week, and at a time convenient to the majority. I plan to start this class the second week in June. If you are interested, see me at the pro-shop.

here at any time the fancy may strike them to play a round of golf. The balance I am supposed to make up through my own initiative by the sale of lessons, balls, clubs, and other equipment. That set-up is okay with me, pal, but—

The dear public has finally arrived at the place where it seems to feel that a bone thrown to me in the shape of a two dollar lesson about once a season is ample—and entitles them to free tips whenever and wherever they may meet me; in the shop, on the golf course, at the Elk's Club, or just after Christian Endeavor. And for some reason or other they have absorbed the idea that whatever they may buy of me will be a premium price—and no better than they can purchase downtown. When I point out the evident differences in quality and workmanship they blandly agree with me—and drop in at Minsky's Drug the next day for another dozen Flying Fools, two hundred tees, and a \$1.69 chipping iron.

Not long ago a member of this club walked into my shop with a spanking new set of Blank's top-range clubs. He had purchased them wholesale through a friend of his that keeps books at the local light and power office. Believe me, I was irked plenty. He had priced these clubs of me previously, and the price I made him was below retail figures. I had made him the price in self-defense because I was afraid of the very thing that happened. Well, discreet inquiry brought to light that he had bought the outfit ten dollars under my price!

The customer couldn't tell the difference between the pro-only line and this 'top range' stuff, although there was a difference. I'm asking you, where in all that's holy is this thing going?

Who made the playing and merchandising end of this game what it is today? You know—the pros. Who teaches them

for nothing when they are young in order to make golfers of them when they get dry behind the ears? The pros! Who has contributed unstintingly of time, money, and enthusiasm to every step upward the game has made? The pros! And where has it got us?

There was at least another thirty minutes of Ted Blayton's verbal blast. He was fighting mad and his tongue dripped acid. He touched on a good many other angles but the foregoing was the meat of the subject.

Ted, in spite of his prejudiced and bitter blast at the conditions existing in his profession, is a smart, level-headed pro-business man. He applies sound business principles to his affairs, and conducts his business along accepted business-like lines. Knowing this, I was satisfied Ted would be reasonable when he cooled off. He was.

We began a clear-headed discussion of the situation over an eight o'clock steak dinner—and closed up at four the next morning over a scotch and soda. And brother, before we got through we were forced to stare cold reason full in the face. The things we saw there were not all pleasant, but we took 'em in stride.

If you dislike cold, hard truths about yourself you'd better start ducking—because there were some discoveries made you certainly will not like.

(To be concluded in August)

J. W. Sproul Named US Golf Ball Sales Mgr.

JOHN W. SPROUL, for many years assistant sales mgr. of the golf ball dept., United States Rubber Co., now is sales mgr. of the department. Sproul is widely known among professionals, having made the tournaments from coast to coast for years, conducted many of the US Rubber pro business conferences, and called on hundreds of pros at their clubs.

Sproul has been with the US company since July, 1923, and with the golf ball dept. since Jan., 1924. He was made asst. sales manager in 1929.

He knows what the pro picture is and goes into his new responsibility with the best wishes of an army of pros.

Sproul succeeds E. C. Conlin who resigned several weeks ago and now is in the Roosevelt Hospital, New York, putting up a strong battle to regain his health.