

Pro Income Is Up, But '42 Outlook Demands Wise Planning Now

1941 is probably last of 'normal' years for some time. Pro prospects for next season to depend much on pro's own initiative

PLAYING equipment and lesson sales are estimated to have increased this season about at the same percent as the play increased in 1941 over 1940, approximately 7% according to information available in late September.

This means that pro business total income was considerably better than last year as play increase was greatest at public and fee courses where pros are on a salary basis, sometimes having only limited, if any, merchandise sales concessions. Therefore, to hit the 7% increase pros at courses where they had full sales concessions had to do a quite satisfactory volume.

But, as usual, the ointment contained flies. Pro business was best at the smaller and average clubs. Members of the clubs usually classed as "leading" frequently were kept away from a normal amount of golf play by defense business duties. There was further development of the situation that has made the private clubs of high social prestige often much less desirable as pro spots than clubs that have memberships of lively ordinarily well-to-do people. The pros who have ownership interests in fee courses did very well this year, but then the fellow who has progressed to the extent he is part or full owner of a course generally has demonstrated superior business ability.

Golf for the Masses

In almost every territory there was evidence that the base of golf is broadening and that it's becoming a popular sport of the masses. Therein seems to lie biggest earning possibilities in the future for the pro who is a live promoter and businessman, and, in the case of the public courses, an adroit politician. However, in the latter case, the best politician at the public course seems to be one who is no politician at all but conspicuously a non-partisan public servant in recreation.

As to prospects for 1942 pros are concerned to the extent of thinking and planning more than they've ever done before.

A great majority of the pros of 45 or older were in the First World War. The American-born fellows recall that golf had a boom in and after the war. The British-born have a different and troubled story to recollect.

First effect of war has been on shipments of clubs and balls which were often tardy this year. It is doubted that unless there's a very great increase in demand for balls and clubs next year that there will be a severe shortage. Fall orders by pros and stores seem to have been amply adequate for getting the 1942 season started with adequate stocks. The pro who hasn't looked ahead may be out of luck. The credit situation is tightening plenty and manufacturers seem to be in position to entirely disregard any but C.O.D. orders from the boys who have been indifferent about their ratings.

Despite large orders for moderate- and low-priced goods from the stores, authorities who base their guesses on this year's experience believe that the big wages in defense industries will mean gratification of suppressed desires for pro-quality merchandise by the turf-trodding toilers in 1942.

No More Quarter Balls

The quarter golf ball will be no more. Prices of clubs haven't gone up as much as justified by material and wage increases, but those hikes may come later. Nobody knows. One thing's certain and that is that the 75 cent ball next year will be a standout bargain. That should be good news for the pros as they sell the greater volume of the top-price balls.

Women's business is sure of a strong play from the wiser and energetic pros. This was another good year for women's

Golf instruction will be done in a weekly series of television lessons as one of the initial steps in the extension of golf teaching as a feature of the National Physical Training program of the U. S. Office of Civilian Defense. The PGA and the National Golf Foundation are working closely with officials of the Physical Training organization.

play and buying, with many pros doing far better than they expected to do in getting women's patronage. They thought they'd have a tough time, considering that women naturally are store customers and sharp shoppers. But the boys who knew the competition required smart work on their part cashed in.

GOLFDOM has heard from numerous pros that they intend to make more of a feature of apparel and accessory business in 1942 so they'll have their shop income at least partially protected in case they can't get all the clubs and balls they can sell.

Jobs Being Held Tight

There wasn't the turnover in pro jobs that the draft was expected to bring. Jobs are being held fast, and generally handled smarter. The pro at the border-line job where he doesn't know until September whether he is going to make enough to carry him through the winter, or has been giving the club his services free, has been unable to jump to a good paying defense job because of his lack of technical qualification. Therefore, he's more intensively worked the spot he has.

Were it not for the usual short terms in office of golf club officials and this handicap to long-range planning, chances are that there would be a change in the customary plan of paying the pro.

Club officials now confronted with the problem of getting clubs strengthened to meet rather desperate emergencies have discovered that the pro department properly organized and conducted might have saved a lot of difficulty, especially in membership turnover.

The pro's potentialities as a promoter of golf interest and a solicitor of new members are curtailed by the necessity of sticking to the club to make whatever quick profit he can from equipment and lesson sales. A veteran Eastern amateur with extensive experience as a club official believes that an important move pros and clubs missed was in not giving the pro a worth-while salary and making one of his duties that of helping to secure new memberships. Now that private clubs don't often have the money for pro guarantees of a substantial nature he is of the opinion that a bonus arrangement should be worked out to keep the pro busy in the winter and spring, especially, in securing new members.

Said this golfer: "Pros, and clubs too, ought to study the chances of renewing

one of the strong membership attractions a club had in the earlier days. Then, many a member joined a club primarily because of the pro it had. I think there are many pros today as valuable to club members as were the earlier pros but one doesn't hear often of somebody joining a club because of the fellow the club has as its pro."

Promotion activities that have been brought into national recognition by the National Golf Foundation and the PGA during the past several years again have put the spotlight on the bright and industrious pro as a membership magnet. Each year more pros check up on members who visit the club only at rare intervals, and now the pro who is most secure in his job is the fellow who makes it his business to see that the member gets frequent demonstrations that the pro department is on the job to see that the member and his family get value for their investment in club membership.

Group Lessons Show Benefits

Group lessons for women and children have been definitely effective in getting and holding members. As a general rule pros have been ahead of club officials in learning that women's interest in club affairs is one of the surest factors in keeping a club in sound shape these days.

Closer teamwork between pro, greenkeeper and manager has helped clubs operate more economically and with greater service to the members. One of the reasons for this cooperation was explained by a well known Midwestern pro who put the case this way:

"When clubs had to cut down during the depression and made the pro a pro-greenkeeper, it taught pros who had been cussing and fighting with greenkeepers that the greenkeepers had many reasons for damning the pros for lack of understanding. Like many of the older pros I had been a greenkeeper. In those old days you could get by with a course that had greens not as good as most fairways today. Now the member wants perfection on a low maintenance budget regardless of what nature has decided.

"It's taught me that grass can be more stubborn and unreasonable than even the members. Seeing what the greenkeepers today are up against reminded me that the managers also must have grief I didn't know about and wouldn't want on my own job.

"With club officials having so much to worry about they couldn't give any too much time to the clubs this past season—and possibly less next season—the men hired to run the clubs had better get together to run the club smoothly or they'll be out of clubs."

With the reminder fresh in mind that it was the high-handicap players who quit the clubs when the depression started, pros have been intent on instruction advance and extension to improve the scoring standard, hence the playing program, of golfers.

Several promising tips for possible great progress in golf instruction effectiveness have popped up at the Purdue and Minnesota university clinics which PGA sections sponsored. The PGA's Teaching Committee is hopeful that it has secured from the pros ideas that may give golf instruction great impetus.

Average Golfer Plays Better

Elimination of costly and unnecessary traps may give the rank and file golfer encouragement. Harry Cooper voiced an interesting hunch recently in saying that he believed golf instruction had developed average players more than is realized. He said the progress did not show because so many golf courses now had watered fairways and the average player couldn't get the distance formerly secured on the baked fairways of summer. Harry remarked that if you'll observe how the scoring has improved on the non-watered courses, even though at the cost of walking discomfort and lack of scenic attraction, you'll be convinced the average golfer is hitting the ball much better than did the average golfer of 15 to 25 years ago.

Judges Study Heddon Pro Questionnaire Replies

REPLIES are now in the hands of the judges in the 1941 PGA Questionnaire Contest, for which James Heddon's Sons Co. has put up a purse of \$500 in prizes. This contest, open to all members of the PGA, is similar to the one held last year and for which the same donor contributed the prize money.

The ten questions making up the questionnaire cover such widely diversified subjects as "What is the greatest accomplishment of the PGA in the past 25 years," and "Do you favor the present stymie rule?" Other questions touch on caddie training, teaching, publicity, shop management, and short courses.

Results of the contest will be announced as soon as the judges—Thomas G. McMahon, J. Leslie Rollins, and Earle F. Tilley—have had time to go over the entries and pick the ten winners. First prize is \$150, second prize is \$100.00, and so on down to a ninth and tenth prize of \$10 each.

USGA Lightning Ruling—Competitors in USGA events may hereafter discontinue play of their own volition, without penalty, if they think they are endangered by lightning. They may do so even though the Committee may not have given a specific signal to stop play.

The Association adopted this procedure out of a desire to afford all possible opportunity for players to protect themselves in the event of lightning, noting the many deaths and injuries from lightning on golf courses in recent years.



Photo at left was taken at the 4th annual GSA tournament, played at Midland Hills CC, St. Paul, Sept. 16, and won for the second straight year by Emil (Mashie) Masciocchi, Onwentsia (Chicago district) greenkeeper. Left to right: Nelson Monical, Westfield CC, LeRoy, Ohio, who placed second with a 75-75-150 for the 36-hole championship play; Masciocchi, winner, with 69-75-144, and holding O. M. Scott & Sons Co. trophy; Don R. Boyd, Portage CC, Akron, Ohio, and GSA President Harold Stodola, Keller Park, St. Paul, extreme right. Boyd and Stodola tied for third place in the regular play, but Don edged out the prey in their playoff. Superintendent Emil Picha was host and had the course in fine condition.