

The Pro's Contract -or, Is Golf a Business?

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ONE of the questions most frequently asked golf professionals is: "Why do pros insist on contracts?"

The professional athlete considers such a question silly. To the public, however, the question is neither silly nor idle—for the simple reason that the public seldom thinks of the golf professional as a professional athlete. It is unfortunate that this is true.

As a professional athlete the golf pro occupies the not-to-be-envied position of first man—on the bottom—of the sports totem pole. If he plays the game for a living he seldom reaps the windfall of a guarantee for any appearance. If in rare instances this does occur, the guarantee seldom covers more than bare expenses. A snap comparison with this situation, as related to other sports activities, leaves the average playing pro wondering if perhaps he might not, over a period of years, have done better as a barber, a baker, or a Fuller Brush salesman.

If the gentleman, however, follows the lines of least resistance and becomes a club pro, he attaches himself to a phase of the game that offers him a guarantee. This guarantee comes to him in the form of a salary, the amount being generally about enough to keep the average deb fresh out of a business school typing course lying awake nights wondering just how she can get by on it.

The club pro of course doesn't. He adds some to his guarantee and hires himself an assistant. Realizing that to be a financial success on his job, as well as a professional success to his club, he must be a red-hot combination of player, teacher, promoter, public relations expert, and business man, he forgets about working hours and knuckles down to the task of trying to scratch enough moola out of the membership of his club to cover that assistant deficit and keep off the relief rolls the next winter. The fact that he manages to do so in 99 per cent of the cases escapes entirely the notice of the public.

However, if the average golfer or golf club member were aware of this situation, his mental reaction would probably be: "Whoinell would want to be contracted to such circumstances?" The average club pro frequently wonders, too—and keeps on renewing 'em. Nobody knows why.

Contract arrangements existing in the golf field today have no counterpart in any other field of sports. A football or baseball club signing a player, manager, scout, or coach, does so with the one idea in mind that the man will prove an asset to the club, the supposition being that assets of most types eventually turn into black financial figures. Seldom, however, do such thoughts enter the mind of the average golf club board member when arranging a professional contract. In far too many cases the contract is drawn because the pro insists on it. The pro insists on it because his experience with boards has taught him that there is but one way to partially protect himself from the changeable vicissitudes of such bodies—contract. The board counters by requesting periodical modifications—modifications that seldom favor the pro's position.

Pro golf is indeed a peculiar vocation, being a thing apart even in its own field—sports. Being such an individualistic endeavor, unionization, which might provide some standard for basic pro contracts, is probably out of the question. It is a comparatively easy matter to unionize musicians, bricklayers, or carpenters, and provide some sort of standard contract for the job they are to perform. Not so with the golf pro, however. The pro contract generally covers a multitude of duties, many of them so abstract they can, if the occasion arises, be construed by the party of the first part as meaning most anything or everything. Should the pro, through the idea of some influential board member, balk at the idea of weeding greens, tending bar, or cleaning up the locker room, a discreet whispering campaign serves to bring him back into line in short order. The pro, although as individualistic as the Statue of Liberty, still is as a rule more than willing to give his club full cooperation and the old college try—and very often winds up doing a great many things gratis that are usually delegated to the houseman or porter.

In justification, however, it must be noted that only about 50 per cent of the reason for this old college try is the pro's sentiment for his club. The remaining 50 per cent is due to the fact that he must not endanger his chances of covering that "assistant deficit" and keeping off the

relief rolls—even though he has a contract.

Golf clubs, and the game as a whole, are badly in need of better Boards of Directors. The golf pro is badly in need of better contracts. The former would automatically provide the latter, and could be attained by disposing of approximately 90 per cent of the average club's board personnel. Fifteen to twenty men as a rule can be depended on to forego personal prejudices and show an active personal interest in the welfare of the club as a business proposition. The history of golf, however, shows that they, as a group of golf club board members, have failed to do so—to the distinct detriment of the golf professional and the welfare of the game.

Which brings us back to the probable mental reaction of the public: "Whoinell would want to be contracted to such circumstances?"

Who—but the golf pro?

Colonial CC, Fort Worth, to Start New Tourney in 1946

★ THE FIRST ANNUAL Colonial CC, Fort Worth, Tex., Invitation tournament has been announced for May of 1946. It will be comparable in character to Bobby Jones' Masters tournament, according to F. M. Highfill, Marvin Leonard and Johnny Ballard, the committee in charge of plans for the event.

A season-long scoring system is used to determine the contestants in the Augusta (Ga.) tournament. No such system will be used by the club which was the scene of the 1941 National Open, last one held. Colonial will invite the players it wants.

"We will make this the most select tournament in the world," says Ballard.

Golfing skill will be the prime consideration, but not the only one in determining what 24 professionals and 12 amateurs which will make up the field.

The play will be on a medal score basis over 72 holes—18 each for four days.

The \$10,000 (or more) which will be distributed among the professionals will, it is believed, make the individual prizes the largest offered at any tournament. As much as \$3,500 may go to the winner.

Awards consistent with the rules of the USGA will be given the amateurs.

All players will be the guests of the club for the duration of the tournament and will have no clubhouse or playing expense.

It has been estimated by Highfill that the club will spend another \$15,000 or \$20,000 in staging the first tournament.

Exact dates of the 1946 tournament have not been decided upon but they will fall on one of the two week-ends

between May 16 and May 26. Play will start on a Thursday and end on a Sunday.

"Craig Wood's clinching 30-foot putt on the final hole of the 1941 Open was still rolling on our No. 18 green," says Leonard, "when plans for this annual tournament were started. Because of the war we had to postpone its launching from 1942 until 1946, but we feel that by next spring conditions will be favorable."

Spalding Card Rack Aids Wounded Veterans

★ CARD PLAYING helps relieve the long pull for our hospitalized servicemen. But it's tough for men with the use of only one hand to manipulate the cards. To overcome this handicap veterans are being furnished a small wooden rack manufactured by A. G. Spalding which conveniently holds the cards upright in front of the player.

A broken hand, that interfered with his game of gin-rummy gave the idea of the rack to Jack Jaffe, owner of a cigar stand in the New York Curb Exchange. He called the device "Little Jeff" the name given him by the members of the Exchange.

Distribution of the racks began with some samples he sent to service hospitals in the New York area. Letters of appreciation from veterans were so enthusiastic that it was not long before Fred C. Moffatt, Chairman of the Board of the Exchange had collected a good sum of money from the members to put "Little Jeff" into "mass production". Approached as possible manufacturer, Spalding became interested to the extent that it agreed not only to make the racks but to share production and shipping costs.

Incidentally, Mr. Moffatt at the Curb Exchange, 86 Trinity Place, New York, N. Y., welcomes the names of any veterans' hospitals or recreation associations that would like "Little Jeff". Just drop him a line giving the quantity you desire, and they'll be sent immediately without charge.

Franks Heads Allis-Chalmers Industrial Tractor Sales

★ Allis-Chalmers Mfg. Co., Tractor Division, announces the appointment of Ernest Franks in charge of sales of industrial wheel tractors and power units with headquarters at Milwaukee, Wis.

From 1927 until 1935, Mr. Franks was engaged in A-C service and field engineering. His broad experience in the field qualifies him well to handle sales of industrial wheel tractors in addition to the power unit department, which he has headed for the past ten years.