

Wartime Performance Tests Pro's Business Character

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I FEEL reasonably certain that not many pros who remained on the home front will be in the same position or under the same relationship with their clubs as they were before the war.

The wartime restrictions gave the pros an opportunity to prove their business ability and real value to their clubs. Those who failed

to take advantage of their opportunity and permitted a chaotic condition around them, certainly will not hold the same respect of their club officials. Any pro can do a good job while everything is going good around him, but only a few can rise to the occasion and successfully handle a temporary emergency and keep everything under control.

The pros who helped keep their clubs going and stepped up as pinch hitters with their assistance in any department where it was needed, will be more respected by their membership and considered a most valuable asset to their club. Some pros have made such remarkable success of combination jobs as pro-greenkeeper, pro-manager and general manager that they will never return to their old jobs as pros again. Consequently, they will earn a greater income.

The war has taught clubs to be more economical, to be more interested in their labor and material costs, and in general more interested in getting full value for their purchasing dollar. Clubs will not expect more work or longer hours from their employees, but they will demand men who have the ability to give real club service.

I feel that many prewar pros will be unemployed after the war unless they improve themselves to meet the changing conditions. The future will bring a higher standard of home club pros. I believe clubs in the postwar era will pay higher salaries to professionals and demand more business ability and club service.

Since all indications now point to a postwar boom in golf, it is only natural

for the manufacturers and the store accounts to be making plans to cash in on the demand for golf merchandise. The store golf business will continue to show a substantial gain over the pro business because they are better merchandisers and can appeal to the general public. The average private club pro is largely restricted to his own membership for sales.

If a private club*pro attempted to compete with the stores on the same store basis, he soon would be told by his club officials that the club was not an advertising medium for golf merchandise. The beginner who is not a member of any club does not feel at liberty to go to a private club and purchase clubs, consequently the store gets his business. But the pros are in the driver's seat when it comes to getting the business from their own membership. And if they don't get it, it is largely their own fault.

I am convinced that most all pros could earn a greater income and make a larger percentage of sales to their members with a little more intelligent sales merchandising direct to their membership. In other words, the pro needs more general business knowledge of his own specialty business. Where and how can he get it? At the last annual PGA meeting in Chicago, I offered a resolution that the PGA set up a university business course to cover all subjects necessary to the success of the pro shop business. This resolution was unanimously adopted and as a consequence, I was appointed chairman of the Educational committee to bring this program to a successful conclusion. Since the ODT has placed the ban on travel, many members of the Educational committee now feel that we should recommend the adoption of this program as an after-the-war activity. I would sincerely appreciate your ideas on this subject. Also, what you think the PGA Educational committee should do to best serve the membership this year.

I believe the future will bring more open tournaments, larger purses and consequently a large number of pros will make a living exclusively through their playing ability.

Also I believe that this type of professional will be in less demand as a regu-

lar club pro. Clubs will lean more toward pros who have a higher business ability, who will stay at home to develop players who will take more interest in club activity.

For years I have felt that the PGA or someone should mail a series of educational letters to the officials of all clubs each year, informing them of the qualifications of a good professional, what they mean to a club and what they can do to build new life, interest and activity in club affairs. So many club officials do not know the duties or qualifications of a first class professional that they make the common mistake of hiring a man not fitted for the needs of their club.

This is one reason why we have so many turnovers in pro jobs. Many times it was not the fault of the professional; they simply expected too much from a man who had not been trained to do all the things they had expected of him. Professional golf is sadly in need of some sort of a system or service to place the right man in the right job, a job that he is capable of doing well. When this is done there will be less turnover in club professionals, a greater respect of all professionals and more clubs satisfied with their pro service.

I think future golf will see the development of a synthetic green. A green cemented in sections of thick sponge rubber or plastic with a putting surface roughed to produce a speed approximately the same as a regular green. It will be a wearever green with practically no upkeep and immune from the climatic conditions of rain, heat and cold. These greens would be better than a poor grass green and better than the best sand greens. It should be economical and practical from every angle. When this is developed a salesman will be able to sell a complete golf course, the greens, rubber tee mats and all course accessories even a portable clubhouse. The company would send their men to set up the course and put it into operation.

The real sales appeal of this set up would be that it was many times cheaper than a real grass green course and with a very low upkeep. I believe this would have a very popular appeal to small towns with a population between five and twenty thousand. Just think what a thousand such courses would mean to the golf industry of this country. Nearly 20 years ago, my good friend the late Ed Conlin said the idea was feasible but too far in advance for the present day development of golf to justify the expense of rubber green experimental work. I hope it will be one of the great developments of the postwar era.

KEEP ON COLLECTING 'EM

The Japanese Beetle Bows Out

By C. Owen Brantley

★ Tell Mr. Average Homeowner Golfer that an effective method of Japanese beetle control consists simply of placing a teaspoonful of powder at five-foot intervals each way on his lawn and he would probably suggest that you should be committed to an institution. You would never convince him that it is so easy to exterminate this terrible pest. But it can be done, and with little expense, as many greenkeepers have learned.

There is such a powder. It is really a package of germs or bacteria known as milky disease spore dust. It is applied to the turf in the manner described and it is quite effective, for the bacteria attack the grubs of the Japanese beetle in the soil. The grub dies quickly and the bacteria (or spores) multiply to such an extent that each grub infested with the milky disease, releases from three to nine billion other spores and they in turn attack other grubs and so move the disease through the area until all grubs are destroyed.

These spores are all but indestructible, having been found active after four years, and instances have been recorded where they were alive after passing through the digestive tracts of small animals and birds. Other tests revealed that they are not affected by heat or cold, surviving all climatic conditions.

Milky disease spore dust is harmless to humans and animals and is not messy to handle. Its application to the soil is simple. The infested area is treated in the late spring when the beetle grubs are feeding on grass roots or in the fall, right after hatching, when also they are thus engaged. During the winter months, from November through February, the grubs are hibernating from six to eight inches below the surface and are not feeding. The spore dust may be applied at this time, but will be inactive until the grubs begin their feeding. The product is not wasted, for the spores do not die. They are there, waiting for the grubs to show some signs of activity—and then they strike, spreading rapidly over the entire infested area. For years, even though no grubs are in the soil, the spores continue alive and waiting, though they do not multiply when they have no object to attack and feed upon.

One pound of the milky disease spore dust is sufficient to inoculate 4,000 square feet of turf. Since the cost of the dust is five dollars per pound, and since it is hardly likely that a second application will ever be necessary, its economy is obvious.

Milky disease spore dust is packaged and sold under a trade name under patent and recommended by the Dept. of Agr.