

See Changes Available in Pro Business

THREE successful veteran pros who have been taking inventory of the pro business fitness to meet postwar problems, come forth with three major suggestions.

George Corcoran, Starmount Forest CC pro and Pres. of the Carolina PGA section, says the general method of pro shop operation needs a change. Howard H. Beckett, for 27 years pro at Atlanta's Capital City club and widely esteemed as one of the game's soundest businessmen, says that the pros postwar business problems are going to call for PGA management and supervision comparable to that given the tournament circuit.

And John R. Inglis, Fairview CC (Elmsford, N. Y.) pro who for many years has been president of the Metropolitan District PGA points out that a change in method of pro pay in order to attract enough of the right men qualified to care for the expected postwar expansion, is needed. Inglis further declares that the education of golf officials in what they should know about the pro job should be persistently conducted because of the high annual turnover of club officials.

Corcoran says:

"There isn't any question about it, we pros should get together and start making our plans. Without a doubt, there is going to be a tremendous boom in golf equipment and lessons.

"I think in the past pros have made a mistake by equipping our shops with from \$3,000 to \$5,000 worth of golf merchandise only to hire an ex-caddie to run the place, because we could get him at a reasonable salary.

"This has really caused us to lose money in the long run, because a boy of this type has his mind either on the putting green or out playing golf and has not proved to be a very competent man in the shop, therefore, we have lost a lot of sales and the goodwill of the members.

"I don't think you will find the down town sporting goods stores hiring ex-newspaper boys to run their places of business. I am sure they would not stay in business long if they did. We pros should get wise and place competent men in our shops and thus control the down town competition.

"I also believe that the pros and manufacturers should have a much closer relationship than they have had in the past. A few manufacturers have already carried out this policy, and I think they all should, and it has worked out very favorably.

"I am in favor of pros giving more group lessons to high school and college students and returning war veterans. I have been giving lessons in high schools and colleges for the past several years, and this has proven very satisfactory, from the standpoint of selling equipment, etc."

Beckett's opinion is:

"I think we all feel sure that after this war is over things are going to start popping both in the playing and selling angle, but I still can't figure out where a pro at a first class club will use any different methods in conducting his business than he has in the past. In looking over some of your magazines as far back as '29 I find many ideas that apply just as strongly today as then. Like the old fellow talking to his friend said it don't look like there is as much doing today as when he was young, his friend replied there is just as much but it was being done by a different crowd.

"To my mind the answer lies in the articles written by Walter Keller in January GOLFDOM, where in his last paragraph he gives the nucleus of one of our greatest postwar setups. The clubs that expect to be successful must begin to realize that the pro is the man whose whole conduct and management reflects their success as a golf club. He should be paid enough salary or a retaining fee so he wouldn't have to depend on a few months out of the year to make up about ninety per cent of his income. I feel sure that in the past this set up has been the real cause of dissatisfaction and arguments between a pro and his members which has often resulted in a good man losing his job.

"As to pro-education, pro-club relations and pro-manufacturer relations, I think this is a big PGA problem and should be handled as closely as the tournament manager handles our tournaments throughout the year. I appreciate the fact that open tournaments are a big part of our profession but the PGA must realize that there are two branches to our profession. These are the Professional Golfer and the Golf Professional and right now the latter one requires a lot of attention in many ways. I sincerely hope the executive board of our PGA will not miss the boat in this present set up.

"Leaving the postwar department lets look on the present picture. How are we going to keep the game going without golf

balls? Up to this time most of us have been fortunate enough to have just enough to keep our players supplied. The manufacturers keep on crying to send in old balls but how long can this keep up? Right now most balls have been reprocessed so much that a 5000-yard course is a long baby for the average player. What the answer is anybody's guess."

Inglis remarks:

I have enjoyed reading GOLFDOM articles by Don Young, Ed Fitzjohn, and Walter Keller. These are very constructive and hope some good will come from them. Their ideas are also mine and can agree with them on practically everything they have stated. I do believe that a change is needed to keep the game attractive for pro businessmen. Unless something is done to keep pros interested many of them will find other means to make a livelihood.

"Much has been written about educating the pros to be better business men. The fact is however that it is not always the pro that needs the education, it is the club officials and golfers. When they can be made to realize that the pro is really

a necessary asset to the club and that he should receive sufficient amount to keep him contented and eager to serve them, then will the game improve its standards.

"The sales as an average do not amount to very much, at least not enough for the pro to earn a real living. Personally I believe that the sales, the club cleaning and lessons should be considered a little gravy for the pro, repaying him for his long hours which he has to put in. The pro's home life is forsaken in order to render service. I certainly believe that clubs should pay the competent pro not less than say \$3,000 per year, plus whatever he can make from sales. For the amount the club pays him the pro could give lessons free of charge by appointment to the membership and the club could charge the members directly or assess them by the year.

"If this were done I'm sure the membership would benefit tremendously. The pro could treat every member as a pupil and help each to play better golf without the member ever feeling that he was being solicited to take lessons. The pro could do so much along these lines which would keep all the members satisfied and interested."



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