

SMART MARKETING - BETTER TEACHING TO BOOM GOLF



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THE POST WAR PERIOD of World War I, brought a great impetus to golf and its momentum was only stopped when Hirohito took that sneak punch at Pearl Harbor.

When said Hirohito, and his infamous accomplice Hitler are disposed of, this game of golf will take up again not where it left off but with an even greater enthusiasm and impetus.

Golf is practically the only outdoor game that permits people of all ages to engage in competitive exercise.

As was the case after World War I, millions of returning men who had got physically fit out-of-doors turned to golf to retain this fitness. Again many of the millions now engaged in freeing the world of tyrant rule will also want to keep in good shape and for many of them golf will provide the answer.

Thus the golf profession will be faced with a big task in the years that lie ahead. It will be a task for which every pro should fit himself. Being a fine player and teacher are not the only necessary qualifications for a successful pro.

Essentially the pro is a business man and that embraces all that the word implies; service, executive ability, leadership. In short, the pro must be a merchant with sound principles which make for a harmonious relationship with his club members. If he is possessed of these attributes and keeps them in action he will survive the perils of changing conditions the postwar period will bring to golf.

From the pro-manufacturer viewpoint I would like to make a criticism. It's obvious that there must be a variety of qualities to justify a price range and to fit the pocketbooks of the customers. But the manufacturer in the low price range golf clubs should carefully watch the type of merchandise he puts out in that field.

All too often do we see golf clubs that bear names of celebrated pros sold in the low range field that are far from conducive to good golf. They lack balance, shafts are too heavy and stiff, the leather on their grips are too slick and they

possess many other defects that seriously reduce the value of the pro's reputation for sponsoring good playing equipment.

Now who is the fall guy in these cases? First, there's the purchaser who usually can't afford better merchandise, and who because of poor clubs that fail to improve his game becomes discouraged and in many cases quits. Then there's the manufacturer, who through short-sightedness has lost a customer who might have gone on indefinitely purchasing golf equipment.

Would it not be wiser for manufacturers to put a floor under prices for their cheaper merchandise and one that wouldn't permit the error of making pro names of low value? I believe it can be done, and it should be done. The player may have to purchase fewer clubs to start with in pro-name merchandise, but both player and manufacturer will be benefitted in the end. Or is the answer in educating the golfers on what they should buy?

As for the top line merchandise I have no criticism. The pro can thank the manufacturer who puts out that kind of goods. Golf's popularity owes a lot to them.

I would like to offer advice to the younger pro who is coming into the field. He will find that there is a demand for the products of our top manufacturers, so he should not permit himself to be subsidized by any one firm. He will soon learn that a display of the leading brands will increase his business. It will offer an opportunity to make a choice, and competition is still the spice of the business field.

I'm sure there is a great need for pro education, and the PGA is the logical and responsible organization to do this work. The ones to undertake this should be members with long experience who still retain that enthusiasm so essential to the club pro.

From the playing pro standpoint; that our leading pros have done a beautiful job since World War I and are continuing to do so despite the fact that so many of them are in their country's service, as were many of us during the last war.

Our top playing pros are the trail

blazers for they are out in the limelight. The well-deserved publicity they have received and the friends they have made for the game have been a great force in the promotion of golf.

As for pro teaching, the PGA is on the right track in its standardization of the golf swing as was shown in a big way during the 1944 PGA convention. So much so that when the topic of conversation turned to the golf swing the meeting had to be finally called at 7 p. m. after lasting three hours, including the showing of films of the country's golfing greats in slow motion. These reels will be available to PGA members when film can be had for copies.

Many a pro would have given much to have been at that convention, and to have heard and seen that great golfer and president of the PGA, Ed Dudley, demonstrate the correct method of gripping the club. Frank Walsh also gave a fine analysis of the swing as well as Willie Maguire, Joe Novak and Harold Sampson and the discussion between all the delegates was tremendously informative.

The fact of the matter is that the pros have let their hair down (at last) and are willing to discuss their views on the golf swing with other pros. And, my friends, this to me marks a first step in the right direction to standardize the golf swing. I believe a teaching program, such as transpired at last year's PGA annual meeting, should be on the agenda every year and that it should be published for everyone to read.

One of the interesting things brought out during the discussion was the fact that only two of the 60 delegates stressed the straight left arm in their papers on the five essentials of the golf swing. That no doubt would amaze the average golfer. Yet those in the business can cite many a great player, for example golfers like Billie Burke, Joyce Wethered and Harry Vardon as well as many others, who never stressed the straight left arm. There's no doubt that the left arm straightens on the down swing but evidently the pros at the convention felt that it is an effect and not a cause.

Many golf professionals have an opportunity of giving a lift to golf via radio. My radio program has now been on the air some 12 years and I think it has helped me no end for it's made me friends throughout the state. I am certain that it would keep all of us better posted if we had to write a program once a week throughout the golfing year.

Golf after World War II, has a big job ahead. There's the rehabilitation of our great fighting force, the helping of those who are ill, and the reconditioning of the civilian who has been careless about his physical state. Golf will help them all along the path.

Veteran Greensman Eulogized in Newspaper Obituary

★ MANUEL FERREIRA, who died April 30, aged 73, at a Fall River, Mass., hospital, had been with the Fall River CC for 37 years. His death was marked by a Herald-News sports section tribute, running a full column and probably constituted the warmest tribute ever paid to an able and faithful greensman by any newspaper of the community the man served.

Part of this acknowledgment of a fine old gentleman's services to golf follows:

"Despite the handicaps brought on by his age, Manuel went through the 1944 season at the Country Club, doing his work just as efficiently as ever.

"He was looking ahead to the 1945 season but the illness which caused his death laid him low just when he should have been starting to put the greens in condition for his 38th season.

"Manuel was the guest of honor at the dinner which marked the end of another season last November and, in addition to receiving a War Bond, he heard himself praised highly for his devotion to duty and loyalty to the club for 37 years.

"Club members went out of their way to make the 1944 season the happiest of all for Manuel. They admired the grit and determination shown by the veteran greensman who insisted on working as usual despite the inroads made on his health by advancing years. If Manuel never knew it previously, he had reason to feel assured that his efforts of many years were really appreciated when he went home after the party last November.

"Manuel worked for four greenskeepers at the Fall River CC, Jack Howard, Mike Cain, Guy West and Marty Higgins. He saw the old methods of caring for greens give way to the modern system and no one knew better than he how the demands of present day golfers compared with those of the old days. Three-putt greens didn't mean much in Manuel's early days at the club but he lived to see the exacting demands of golfers for perfect greens grow with each passing year.

"Not a 'clock watcher,' Manuel took great pride in his work and the whistle which ended the day for others didn't mean a thing to the veteran greensman. If the particular chore he was doing was not finished when quitting time arrived, Manuel stuck to his guns and didn't leave the course until his task was completed.

"Marty Higgins, pro-greenskeeper, who worked with Manuel for 28 of the latter's 37 years at the club, considers the veteran irreplaceable.

"Manuel was a loyal worker and his great contribution to golf is realized by golfers of the past and present," said Mr. Higgins."