

# Aulbach Sifts Suggestions for PGA Study Course

**G**OLF IN THE near future will produce more different types of professionals than we have ever known before. They will come from all walks of life; some from the field of caddies, from department stores, ex-service men, college athletes, top grade amateur players and just punk kids seeking easy money. Some however, will be smart and aggressive enough to successfully establish permanent places for themselves in professional golf. This all leads to one thing; that the present crop of pros must get on their toes, shake the dust off themselves and begin thinking where they are going to stand after the sudden invasion of "overnight" professionals into their ranks. This will present a serious problem to the home pros of today, a problem that calls for positive and practical thinking plus quick action to avoid a breakdown in the present system of professional business.

The PGA is trying to help its members meet this challenge of the golden golf era of tomorrow by offering them a pro-business course so they can be of more value to their clubs and offer better service to their members. The old established pro who pioneered golf through world wars, depressions and prosperity did quite a satisfactory job. But his work is not finished, he must continue to promote golf with new life, new ideas and new ideals to match the march of time. He must now apply proven ways and means to do a better job than has even been done before. Those who fail to heed the warning will be left behind in the survival-of-the-fittest competition with hundreds of new young ambitious men, many of whom will have what it takes to reach their goal.

For years pros have been asking for a sales training course. Not a complete academic course but enough extra knowledge to assist them in their daily problems. Nearly everyone will agree that such a program would be a grand thing for the game, the pros and the members they serve. The PGA has now gone into action to establish this program in 1946. George Aulbach, Texas PGA president, was named to direct the successful accomplishment of this activity. It's a whale of a job for any pro to tackle but Aulbach accepted the responsibility with the feeling that he could depend upon the cooperation of the golf industry and all PGA members.

## Three Major Problems

Immediately three major problems present themselves before any active work can begin on the program. They are: What is the best method of presenting this program, what subjects will be studied, and who will be the instructors. Definite decisions must be reached on these important factors before further thought can be given to the working details of the program. Aulbach has asked for opinions and suggestions from each member of the PGA Executive Committee, from all sectional PGA officers, from golf manufacturers and from several national sales promotion executives.

The first return of ideas on this subject shows a wide difference of opinion as to exactly how the program should be presented. Johnny Bass, Clifton Park pro in Baltimore, is in favor of the program because he says the exchange of ideas from other pros will help increase his income. He favors a yearly pro-business hand-book and a monthly business letter to each pro. An outstanding national sales executive and specialist in sales training courses said, "The PGA needs a good business correspondence course. Through such a course you can reach the greatest number of members in the most convenient and the most economical way. Statistics prove that at least one third more people will accept some form of higher education if you bring it to their homes. The small town pro, the new pro and the assistant pro, are the men who probably need this training the most. These men do not have the time, money or desire to attend a university short course in some distant city. However, many would accept the program if delivered to them regularly at frequent intervals. Most all national organizations successfully instruct their salesmen by this method. An expensive university course would only attract the better business pros who need it the least."

Many PGA members have said that any educational program would be a wasted effort because the average professional is not going to let anyone tell him how to operate his business. George Hall, Cornell University pro, disagrees with this opinion. He says we now have enough smart pros who will influence others to accept and support this program. He admits, though, that no one can help those who will not help themselves. In this fast

whirl of ever-changing economic conditions, no one stands still. We all go forward or backward. Hall says those who take this course will be the top progressive pros of tomorrow.

Ed Rankin of the L. A. Young Co. recommends the establishment of many sectional clinics under the direct supervision of college faculties. He further suggests the PGA give serious consideration to clinics similar to those held by baseball teams in the south during the winter. He points out that the new PGA National Golf Club in Florida would be an ideal location for such a venture.

George S. May suggests that the course be presented in pamphlet form to the pros in the rural districts and through class instruction in the larger cities. From his wide experience in club management surveys and close association with professionals he recommends the following five point study program.

1. Proper presentation of merchandise.
2. Need of careful observance of business principles as applicable to general selling and extension of credit.
3. A genuine spirit of helpfulness to the prospective customer, the club member.
4. A price range competitive with general trade.
5. A business-like appearance in dress, attitude and conversation.

PGA Vice President Bill Wotherspoon of Tulsa says display, sales and pro teaching should be the three major subjects for discussion. He also believes the fundamentals of greenkeeping should be on the program. Another member of the PGA Executive Committee, C. V. Anderson of Waterloo, Ia., feels that the course should be held at some large university and should include both greenkeeping and teaching. George Corcoran, Carolina PGA president, is in favor of the course including a national standardization of pro prices covering lessons, repair work, club cleaning and a national blue book on club trade-in prices.

Another top sales executive says the PGA should create a Traveling University, a group of instructors to hold business courses in every PGA section every year. "In any event," he said "You must bring the program to them because the average man is not going to the inconvenience of getting higher education that holds no guarantee of a higher income."

Joe Dahlgren of Tulsa has presented the Educational Committee with an excellent course in shop management, covering the subject in a most complete and comprehensive manner. For years Dahlgren has been an enthusiastic advocate of a pro sales training course and has offered his personal assistance in this important work. Willie Ogg, a dean of business pros says, "If all members have the same op-

portunity of sharing in the results of this educational work and the program is carried to a complete finish, it will be the best step forward in 20 years for the business development of the home pro. Les Freeburg of Wilson's Kansas City Division has offered some of the soundest advice and material for a program ever received on the type of business training the most needed by the average professional. He suggests the course be conducted through the mailing of a series of bulletins, pamphlets and letters to all PGA members followed by a general business meeting in some large city.

Several small club pros have advanced the theory that the course should be mailed monthly to every PGA member with a 90 day examination paper and with a reward for all who pass the tests. They think all members should have the advantage of this course and the opportunity of checking the material before they decide whether they care to follow it. They agree that a large percentage of this material would be wasted through this method, but they also believe more members would receive the benefits of the course through this method of reaching the membership. They argue, that many pros who think they are not interested now, may read a line or two that would appeal to them and become regular followers of the course each month.

Stanley Davies, Omaha (Neb.) Field Club pro, and J. Victor East of Wilson's advisory staff, have made specific suggestions based on their own study in educating themselves as outstanding pro businessmen. Both brought out the point that the proposed educational plan would be of great value in showing the younger pro what mistakes can easily be made in pro business. Protected by warnings and knowledge against the common errors the younger man could devote his time and energy to constructive phases of his work.

Attention is being given by Aulbach to the excellent educational programs conducted by greenkeepers' organizations in association with state agricultural college authorities. A highly successful pro business short course was run at the University of Minnesota by the Minnesota PGA and the university athletic department some years ago. Although the sessions were rated by pros enrolled as the most practical and profitable meetings they'd ever attended there was no follow-up on the program.

The pros' Mondays off in the season generally are devoted to shopping or sectional events. The playing events include pro-amateur, pro-senior, pro-women's, pro-juniors and other affairs that have great public relations value, hence they cannot and should not be removed from the pro calendar for class sessions. Whether the

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says Arthur McKnight, of Philmont C. C., Bethayres, Pa., shown (left) on the 12th fairway of this well-known Club's North Course.

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## PGA Study Course

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pros who need the business education most are of a temperament to respond to correspondence schooling is problematical. Most of the veteran pro authorities are of the opinion that class-room sessions would draw men who most need the training because of the probable newspaper and radio publicity which would acquaint the golfing public with the existence of pro business classes and possibly bring some indirect influence to bear in assuring quite large attendance.

Aulbach welcomes advice and suggestions from pros and all others interested in the golf business, in supplying ideas from which the PGA educational plan eventually will be prepared. Letters should be addressed to George Aulbach, Amarillo Country club, Amarillo, Tex.

★ **SEYMOUR WITH SPALDING**—After a 2-year leave of absence from A. G. Spalding & Bros., Charles Seymour has returned to the company as a dealer and golf pro representative in Utah, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and a part of Texas. Joining Spalding in 1930, Seymour served 10 years with the firm's St. Louis and Kansas City offices. He was acting as manager of the first when it was closed in 1940. In 1941 he became the company's representative in the Rocky Mountain area.

★ **HORTON BRISTOL SALES CORP.**, announce the reopening of their Chicago office in the same location occupied before the war, at 36 So. State St. The Chicago office again will be in charge of Joe Finn who has returned to the firm after engaging in war work.

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