

Two Masters Tell Points of Assistants' Training

Pros are beginning to see that first class assistants are rather scarce. This year GOLFDOM noticed that there was really a shortage of the type of promising and well-trained young men the smart businessman pro wants on his staff. In a few cases vet training programs were used in financing the education of young men who had part of the qualifications of a competent assistant but needed plenty of additional schooling.

Except at the larger club where assistants can be engaged for teaching or shop work the assistant has to be a bright young fellow who can fill in at all phases of the master pro's jobs in an emergency and give such service that the members won't complain at the head pro's inability to be everywhere at once. That's asking a lot of a youngster who's fairly new at the business and whose main qualifications generally is a desire to play more golf than most assistants—or pros—get a chance to play.

Previously the assistants generally came up from the clubmakers' bench but now they have a rather well planned training course. The assistant probably will have to learn to teach by the method his employer has found most effective. He will have to be a good shop salesman. He'll have to have an aptitude for business, have a pleasant personality, be loyal, know the members and have a temperament that fits him for the difficult job of instruction.

Boss' Endorsement Rates High

When the assistant has learned enough to be able to hold a master pro job of his own he finds that the strongest factor in his getting a job is the endorsement of a well known professional for whom he has worked.

In 20 years GOLFDOM has been on the inside of over 2000 cases in which pros have been hired. In being consulted as impartial and fairly well informed parties we've seen that knowing club officials place a high premium on the training background of young men. If the young fellow has served satisfactorily under highly regarded pros the officials rightly consider that the pro knows exactly whether or not the young fellow can handle the job to everybody's satisfaction.

Hay's Brilliant Protoges

One of the pro deans whose graduated assistants have become great players, teachers, businessmen and personalities in



Peter Hay, maker of master professionals.

the game is Peter Hay, the lusty veteran at Pebble Beach.

Peter's ideas on selection and training of assistants have made a bright mark on many a young hopeful in golf.

Hay says:

"Selection of an assistant in the golf shop is very important to the golf professional. It has been my experience that very good material can be found from the ranks of the caddies. It has been my habit to observe the caddies at my course, who have worked during their school years and in their spare time and vacations. The caddie-master is of great assistance in selecting a suitable boy.

"The things we look for in a young man for the position of assistant, are, in particular, courtesy, personal neatness and dependability.

Checks With Caddie-Master

"When the need arises for an assistant in the shop, I think of Johnny or Tommy or Billy, whom I had noticed from time to time for their conduct on the golf course. They have finished school and perhaps have gone to engage in other lines of work. I consult with the caddie-master and we decide to contact Johnny. We ask him if he would be interested to come to work as golf pro assistant. He is willing and he comes to work for us. He turns out to be just about the best man one could have. Of course, eventually, after a few years of experience we encourage him in his desire for a pro's job.

"Or it may be that we have in mind

Tommy, who is still caddying. He has shown ability and alertness and the qualities needed in an assistant for the pro. So we take him out of the caddie yard and give him the assistant's job. He makes good progress, learns to repair clubs, etc. and fills the bill perfectly.

"In my experience the boys that I have selected and trained have been exceptional. They have also become outstanding golfers. We have placed some of our boys in excellent jobs at some of the finest courses.

Training Isn't Difficult

"It is not difficult for the professional to train the boy and give him a good foundation to become professional. It is not essential that the assistant be a good golfer to start with. He soon develops his game.

"In the old days we had to teach a boy club-making and repairing and sometimes had to forego the benefits of a salesman to get a good club-maker, but now, with the steel shafts and the manufacturer making all the clubs, the assistant has to specialize on salesmanship instead of club-making.

"The professional becomes a pretty good judge of character and in his choice of an assistant cannot go far wrong. The thing to do is to be interested in the boy and have great patience with him while you are trying to train him."

Jacobus Believes in Balance

George Jacobus, at Ridgewood (N.J.) CC, has developed a number of assistants who have become noted professionals. George, an excellent businessman himself as well as a veteran teacher of noteworthy record, has been able to keep his boys well balanced between their own games and work in the shop.

He believes that the newcomer to pro golf should make up his mind early as to whether he wants to be a great teacher, player or all-around man as pro at a club. It's George's observation that inasmuch as a large number of the boys have greatest zest for playing, the thing for the head pro to do is to encourage this and supervise the training and practice of the lads while acquainting them with every detail of shop operation.

The member expects the assistant to be at the club for the members' service instead of the development of the lad's own game so Jacobus has kept his proteges clearly reminded of that.

George's summary of the main principles involved in training assistants:

"The established professional, like myself, is looking forward to getting a young man with the usual capabilities required



George Jacobus combines playing and business training.

in any business plus a true love of golf and the willingness to undergo time, financial and personal sacrifices during his training period as an assistant.

"Since modern professionals should be classified into two categories: (1) the teaching professional and (2) the playing or tournament golfer, young aspirants should be analyzed to determine their potential playing possibilities and the type of career they wish to pursue.

Player Qualifications

"Those planning to become playing or tournament golfers should above all be inclined toward exceptional playing ability, have a competitive spirit, patience for long hours of practice and the desire to publicly demonstrate the new principles and techniques of the game. It has been my practice to favor this type of professional having had such fine men as Byron Nelson, Jimmy Thomson, Clarence Doser among those working with me under this system.

"I believe in plenty of free hours spent in practice with as much personal tutoring by the top professional as is possible. This touring pro should be well mannered, neat in appearance and a gentleman golfer well versed in golfing etiquettes and courtesies and he certainly must have those capacities in evidence as an assistant.

"The teaching assistant must be thoroughly versed in the mechanics of the golf swing and be able to convey golfing techniques in an understanding manner to all his pupils. He need not be an outstanding golfer, but should possess a sound game using the proper principles of his own teachings. As an aid to his professional, he should present a favorable appearance at all times, keep a neat shop, make general shop repairs, aid in shop merchandising and be responsible for accurate shop records.

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CLUB OFFICIALS

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MASTERS OF TRAINING

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"One of the most important things for assistants to learn is that the members when visiting the club should be made to feel that the service rendered in the golf shop is for the sole benefit and pleasure of their games. In this service they can make each club member's game more pleasurable and something to which they will look forward.

"Both types of assistants should look for guidance to their professionals and should be governed by his policies while working under him."

SHAKE-UP NEEDED

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Pros' Educational Job

The pros have a big job to do in educating the public to the fact that in most cases a golfer can get merchandise just as cheap at a pro shop as at a store, and probably higher grade merchandise. He figures that if a pro is losing business to the stores there is something drastically wrong with the pro's selection of stock, his display and his general business solicitation methods.

Troy is very firmly of the opinion that the golf range business growing on a sound basis and operated by first class pro businessmen is going to be one of the greatest factors in improving the pros' status and earning power at clubs.

One reason for this is that the alert and informed pro at the range gets golfers while they're still in the nursery and brings them up right.

He suspects that half the approximately 3000 pros at golf clubs today are barely getting by financially only because they have greenkeeping and caddie management income in addition to what they make on lessons and in their shops.

Looking at the club pro conditions from his viewpoint he concludes that the pro has not educated his members enough to the value of pro service hence the members may not think there's an injustice in buy-



Zigfield Troy has made his range big business for himself and a busy nursery for the game.

ing clubs "down town" and then asking the pro for free tips on how to use those clubs.

Pay Basis Antiquated

In Troy's opinion the golf pro income situation at clubs generally is on an antiquated and all-around unsatisfactory basis and needs overhauling. Clubs whose members most need pro service to put golfing pep into the establishment haven't got a pay basis that will attract the sort of men they need. The result is that the club suffers more than the pro, for the pro can go out and get himself a job elsewhere, either in golf or some other business.

He says that the tournaments, with the exception of the PGA championship in which qualifiers get expenses, are an example of how too many pros work for nothing. He asserts that tournament promoters should at least give all qualified entrants a guarantee of a day's pay for a day's work.

From where he stands at a highly successful golf range Troy sees that there are going to have to be drastic changes in many aspects of the pro golf business if it is going to make the most of the vastly increased opportunities being created by the hundreds of thousands who are coming into the game via the golf ranges.

EVANSTON'S CADDIE PROGRAM

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Caddie Committee: Enoch Steen, a father and a successful business man; Bob Hanley of football fame; Joseph Dobler, enthusiastic Boy Scout leader; Wilson Arbogust, a former caddie himself; and Maurice Owens, who is experienced as a leader in boys' organizations.

Members of the Evanston Golf Club have a very special interest in their caddies. Every member is charged with the responsibility of his caddie's welfare. Many members have boys of their own who are caddies here.