

Shake-up Needed in Pro Business, Says Troy

By **HERB GRAFFIS**

Remember when some of the pros used to look down their noses at colleagues in the business who were at public and fee courses? Then the word got around that in some places canny city management and fee course owners were making smart and diligent pros deals that gave the courses the benefit of vigorous promotion-minded professional service and wisely gave the resourceful pros earning power that kept them at top speed making more play and happier golfers than the courses ever had had before.

Now some fee and public course pro jobs are among the biggest income jobs in the country and the owners and public at those courses are profiting from hiring the best qualified men they could get.

There's another development somewhat similar to the public and semi-public course pro change going on in the golf range business. For some years some well-managed ranges have been hiring competent pro instructors. Usually in those cases the pro owns all or an interest in the range. During war years when most of the courses had to virtually shut down because of lack of balls the range business suffered somewhat of a setback but now it's growing tremendous. And it certainly is a testing ground of a pro as a businessman.

Ranges a Big Business

Location, ground rental, design, construction, lighting, equipment, operation, parking, sandwich and drink business and other phases of the business either can be

handled just so-so or expertly. In one case the profits may be fairly good for a while because the boom's on, but if the job's well handled from the start it can become one of the biggest sources of pro income in a district.

Zigfield A. Troy's case in Blue Island, Ill., a southern suburb of Chicago, shows what a smart, energetic pro can do on a golf range job. Troy is a golf businessman who has been making thousands of converts for the game at his Sheldon Heights Golf clinic, 115th and Halsted Sts. Note that he calls his place a golf clinic, not a golf driving or practice range. That label gives the Sheldon Heights place distinction and the atmosphere of being a scientific place to learn and practice golf.

Open 24 Hours a Day

Troy and Sandy Pettigrew are the professionals there. The establishment is located on the fringe of a very active industrial area. It's open 24 hours a day and the night workers come from their jobs for relaxation after the lights are turned out over the tees and the cool fresh early morn makes conditions perfect for golf practice.

Troy is an aggressive advertiser. He uses big display space in neighborhood newspapers, has ads on benches placed for waiting passengers of buses and street cars, and uses signs, folders and letters. He goes after business that ordinarily would go to stores and he gets it because of more powerful advertising and shrewd stressing of the pro angle. Once in a while



Troy's group instruction classes at his golf range are a long established feature which builds volume.



Troy has attractive ads on corner seats for street car and bus waiting patrons.

he features "pro only" merchandise in his ads and in no case does he cut prices on standard-priced golf merchandise.

He shows a lot of them, stores and pros, how to sell in big volume. He does pros considerable good by accenting their value to the player in his ads. For instance, one of his display ads in the Calumet Index reads:

OUR BUSINESS IS GOLF

If you are in need of golf equipment buy direct from a golf professional. He will take a personal interest in seeing that you are fitted properly. There is no charge for his professional advice.

He will suggest only the clubs you'll need, for his primary interest is improving your game. If you do not have a certified golf professional visit our pro shop.

Our professionals will be happy to discuss your game with you.

*Lessons Now Going On—Take Some!
They'll Improve Your Game!*

"THE PRO SHOP"
SHELDON HEIGHTS
GOLF CLINIC

"Where Honest Values Make Friends"

Lesson Books Draw

He gets heavy traffic into his shop. One of the attractions that bring people in is his advertising of the National Golf Foundation's "Golf Fundamentals" booklet which is given free to the visitors. That's brought him an army of people who come to get something free that they want and then look around in the shop and buy something else they want.

He has on the books signature of Sheldon Heights Golf clinic and his own name and that of Sandy Pettigrew as pros.

There is clever merchandising even in the scorecard of the miniature course at the place.

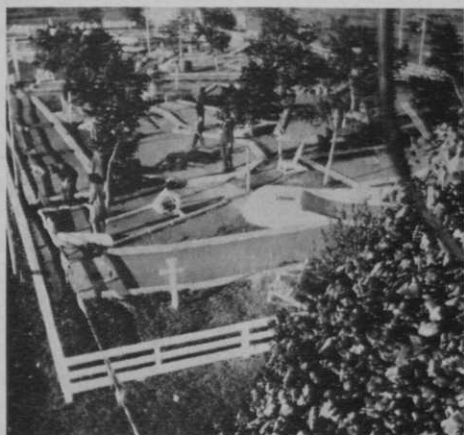
A big business in repairing of clubs is done at the Sheldon Heights establishment. Troy and Pettigrew don't shove merchandise at their patrons. They are interested first in the people playing golf with whatever they may happen to have, or at the range using the Sheldon Heights equipment.

Player Improvement Needed

Troy declares that one of the weak spots in golf as a business is that so many players are no better today than they were 10 years ago. Of course he knows the indifference and lack of time of the player that are responsible for this condition but he says it's the main challenge to professional golfers at clubs today.

He is certain that the golf ranges, properly staffed, are going to do a lot to correct this condition, thus increase the amount of golf play.

He gets plenty of private club members at his place so is in position to appraise



Troy's putting course is heavily patronized day and night.

the pro situation from a detached perspective. He thinks that next to the failure to emphasize the lessons at clubs there is the failure to properly impress upon members that golf is such an individualistic game that careful expert advice in selecting clubs actually should be one of the big benefits the member receives for his dues.

Part of the failure to impress these two points he blames on club officials but says that their guilt is secondary since the pro would get the big direct profit from the increased interest in the game that would come from greater proficiency as the result of lessons and proper clubs.

(Continued on page 62)

CLUB OFFICIALS

A NEW SERVICE OFFERED BY C. S. S.
LET US MAKE YOUR JOB AN EASY AND
EFFICIENT ONE

It's easy to give good management,
good food, good service, and have a
good financial showing under the
C. S. S. plan of operating.

WHAT MORE IS THERE TO MAKING YOU A
HAPPY OFFICIAL?

WRITE: CLUB SYSTEMS SERVICE
P.O. BOX 279, DOWNERS GROVE, ILL.

MASTERS OF TRAINING

(Continued from page 45)

"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

(Continued from page 52)

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

(Continued from page 48)

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.