

Pro and Members Benefit From Competitive Programs

By **MARION ASKEW**

Pro, The Oaks Country Club, Tulsa, Okla.

The member's and the pro's opinions of what's the most important detail of the pro job may differ. And you know whose opinion carries most weight in case of a difference. It's the member's.

You and I as pros may think that the most important thing about our jobs is teaching so we'll have all of our members scoring better than most of them have any earthly chance of doing. But as we get older in our pro careers we see some of our happiest golfers are fellows who shoot around 100—or even higher—day after day. They make their dime bets and have a marvelous time.

Now should I, as a pro, try to get such a foursome of high-handicap men to be faithful pupils of mine on the lesson tee by high-pressure or discreet selling? I can say to myself that the fellows would have more fun if they could score better but in the case of a number of members they're so temperamentally and physically constituted that they're already having as great enjoyment out of golf as anybody else

around the club. So it's really a delicate thing to push instruction to them.

After all, I'm hired to see that all members have the most possible fun. They don't care particularly how high or low my lesson income is, and if I were a member and one of the members were the pro I suppose I'd feel the same way about it.

Picking the people to whom lessons would add to the pleasure of their games gives me enough lesson time without putting on a campaign to get some cheerful and contented duffer whose improvement would entail a long and tedious routine at the expense of his playing time.

Or, if you believe the pro shop operations are the most important detail of a pro's competent handling of his job, again you'll have differences of opinion.

I see, as does every other pro, members playing with clubs that are so poorly fitted to them that if a pro playing star were under the same handicap he'd have trouble breaking 80. I, as every other pro, feel like kicking myself for not having sold clubs to



There is plenty of paper-work in a well handled pro job and at this desk in a corner of his shop Askew can handle that task.



Marion Askew at The Oaks has an attractive display by the sales-book and cash register where buyers get a tactful suggestion of "something more."

these members so they'd get what they need instead of what they picked up at some store.

And, naturally, I want to figure out some way of replacing this incorrect equipment with what the player should have. But again there's a chance for a clash of opinion between the pro and the member. The golf club is a place where low-pressure selling must be done. Not many members will be any too happy about coming into the pro shop if they think they are going to be "promoted" for a purchase every time they enter.

In the pro shop the policy has to be to make it tempting and easy for the member to buy, rather than let him be conscious that you are trying to sell him something.

Well, you get those differences between the pro's necessity of making a living and the member's insistence in having fun in a lot of activities at a golf club. The pro's successful handling of his job depends on how tactfully he can play to the member's opinion.

All Agree On Having Fun

There is only one place where there is no conflict in the opinions and interests of player and pro and that is in the matter of plenty of entertaining competition that gives everybody in the club a chance to win a prize. The member joins the club because he wants to play golf. The more golf

that is played the more money the pro makes, and the stronger he stands with his members.

Consequently there is fullest agreement and mutual benefit when the pro is intensely interested in the arrangement and operation of a lively and pleasant golf program.

The pro whose club isn't getting enough entries and a wide distribution of prizes at his club has a touchy proposition and one that certainly calls for his attention.

Perhaps the committee in charge of arranging the calendar has just kept the same events on the schedule year after year. The prize list may be low and distribution inclined to favor the same group of players. Correction of those and other defects benefits the members, the club and the pro. The pro has to use his experience and tact in putting a good calendar into effect unless his club's committee will take immediate care of the situation.

At The Oaks CC our committee has one of the best arranged programs I've ever seen for appealing to all the members and having new elements in the schedule each year.

We have 8 regular monthly handicap tournaments in addition to our 4 annual club championships. The 4 fixtures are the club championship at match play, the 4-ball championship, a handicap tournament and a "sudden death" tournament of 4 9-



Note top-of-counter display of head-covers, an item many may otherwise forget to buy. Shoe storage is prominent and that helps make sales.

hole matches. We finish our season with turkey shoots on Thanksgiving and Christmas.

To pay for prizes for these tournaments members sign a \$5 tournament card which covers entry fee in every tournament for the year. Last year the entry fees under this plan were \$750. All of it was spent for pro shop merchandise as prizes. This year the total will be more than \$1000.

In working with the golf committee to provide good selection of pro shop prizes the pro not only helps get entries for the competitions but puts a goodly sum into his own cash register.

The women's tournaments should be given ample care by the pros. The women need help and although their prize list doesn't come anywhere near as high as that of the men it's business that brings a lot of good-will for the pro with it.

At The Oaks I give 6 group lessons to women in helping to build up women's tournament interest and ambitions.

This matter of paying particular attention to the competitive events of members I'm sure is something that every pro will find is part of his job that will benefit all of the members and make the pro a profit in cash and good will.

There often is a tendency to depend too much on the blind bogey competitions for pro shop profits. At some clubs the same group of fellows keep winning the balls. If that's the case the pro had better be ex-

amining his handicap rack cards. It could be that some of the members have lower handicaps than they really should have and are just too nice or unknowing to complain. They may resent being told that they are short-counting themselves on the handicap, but that's only one of a thousand situations the pro must treat with tact.

JAYCEES SPONSOR NATIONAL JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP

The 2nd National Junior Golf Championship sponsored by the United States Junior Chamber of Commerce will be held July 29th through August 2nd, at the Mt. Hawley CC, Peoria, Ill. The tournament, a match play event, is open to all boys under 19 years of age, who have qualified in State Junior tournaments held or endorsed by State Junior Chambers of Commerce.

Tournament Chairman, Clifton Hill, announces the Peoria Junior Chamber of Commerce will provide full lodging and entertainment for all participants in the event.

HONOR HARRY ROBB—Thirtieth anniversary of Harry Robb as pro at Milburn club (KC dist.) was celebrated by 200 club members and their guests April 23. The widely known veteran suffered a heart attack the night before the party and couldn't attend. Latest reports are that Harry's recovering nicely but that he won't be playing golf for quite a while.