

Manager's Job Made Easier By Help From Club Members

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Editor's note: Bruce Herd, widely-known manager of the Flossmoor (Ill.) CC and member of a family famed in golf, received his early training as a professional with his father at Littlestone in England from 1911 to 1921. He came to South Shore CC (Chicago) in 1922 and remained until 1938. From there he went to Flossmoor as club professional before being made manager. Bruce's father, at Littlestone from 1895 to 1939, was made an honorary member and presented with a nice purse on his retirement.

Take it from me, the business of managing a club and especially that of running the club dining room under present conditions presents headaches. This is especially true for one who was suddenly assigned this added responsibility after enjoying the comparative ease of a nice comfortable job as professional with hardly a care in the world but the golf scores of his members.

During the war our board of directors was confronted with the thankless task of finding a general manager for the club. With little notice the board decided that Herd should take the job and the decision was made over all the objections I could raise. I assumed my new duties with some misgivings. I say some, but it took only a few months for me to realize the full import of my new responsibilities.

Difficult Operating Problems

I had the mistaken impression that every department in the club should run and operate as smoothly as my golf shop had done for many years. But this was not to be. After a battle of several months (remember, we had no meat, no supplies, no help and what we did get was not dependable) with new problems every day and a trip to the hospital with close to a nervous breakdown I was convinced it was impossible.

My only alternative was to make the most of a bad situation which I proceeded to do in the best way possible with the help

at hand. It was a case of waiting for the day when better help would be available and food and supplies would be back to normal.

Today, help is much better but still on the scarce side. The food situation is the big headache—plenty of it, but what a price! As a result the displaced golf pro is still in the middle, thinking back to the happy days when he could sell somebody a few balls, give a couple of lessons, play a round of golf, go home and have a couple of beers, and feel at peace with the world.

Seriously, Flossmoor weathered the war years very well. We were able to keep maintenance up to a satisfactory degree and in some cases add to the general plant makeup.

Dining room receipts have remained at a fairly high level, equal to that of 1946 even though the number of meals served dropped down during the early months of 1947 because of the bad weather. It was necessary to raise prices in the spring of 1947 to offset increased cost of labor and food supplies. We have made a few slight increases in prices this year but they in no way offset the rise in wages and food costs with which we have had to contend.

Quality Maintained

Quality of food and supplies has been strictly maintained. In this club as in most others I must buy and serve the very tops in everything. It is impossible to attempt any economies in this department. As a result cost of food supplies, notwithstanding the increases made in menu prices has gone up from 49.1% to 66.4% and may go possibly higher. Our only alternatives as I see it is either to raise menu prices further or take a loss in dining room operation. The club will never consider lowering the quality of the food. We have tried to vary the menus but find that the demand is always greater for the substantial dishes which call for the choice cuts and the best of foods.

We are fortunate in having practically all of our prewar kitchen staff on hand. Our biggest problem is keeping regular

waitresses on hand through the season due to the fact our location makes it necessary for us to room and board all of our help. After some difficulty at the beginning of the season this problem has been solved and we now have some semblance of a permanent staff. Extra waitresses, and other extra help, have been fairly plentiful, but, of course, at high wages. We have shortened by a half hour the time for serving dinner but otherwise have not made any changes.

Job Has Compensations

Taking over the general managership of a fine club like Flossmoor at a time when problems seemed interminable has had its compensations which far outshadow the difficulties experienced in the beginning.

In the first place, the club membership is a grand group and as fine as one could wish to work for. They have given me every assistance and the board of directors have always stood back of me 100 per cent. With this kind of support I have been able to accomplish some things that would have been impossible under different circumstances. As club professional I had been on the best of terms with all of the members. This, I am sure, has been one of my greatest assets in assuming my added responsibilities.

Two years ago we were able to show a fair margin of profit. You can imagine how grateful I was when after I suggested that the money be used for the installation of a new refrigeration system and new course equipment they authorized me to go ahead without any questions being asked.

At the end of the 1947 season I wanted to rebuild several of our tees and do some additional landscaping around the water hazards. The labor situation was very tight and wages were high. I suggested that the purchase of a caterpillar tractor would probably pay for itself in a year or so. At the next meeting of the board I was authorized to make such a purchase. It has more than half paid for itself in the short time we have had it.

When one gets that kind of cooperation it certainly makes up for a lot of the heartaches and bad sessions that may have occurred through the seasons.

Planning a Pro Career

Bulletin of the Northern California PGA contains sound advice for the young man who is planning a future as a golf professional and for the professional who engages the young fellow as an assistant.

The bulletin reads:

A. Qualities to be developed.

1. Be neat in his personal appearance and dress.

2. Develop a courteous personality.
3. Study the English language.
4. Take a course in public speaking. A man who uses good grammar has an advantage over a man who is lost for words.
5. If possible, take a course in book-keeping.
6. Practice your golf game in all your spare time.
7. Develop a good looking swing if you are going to be a good golf pro. Club members prefer a pro with a good sound swing over one who has many faults and is a good scorer.
8. When possible give free instructions to junior members of your club. In teaching the youngsters you will develop confidence in your ability as a teacher.
9. Learn the art of teaching. The more teaching you do the better you will be in time.
10. Attend night school and take the following subjects:
 1. Typing
 2. Journalism
 3. Commercial Arithmetic
 4. Salesmanship

B. Duties to your pro.

1. Keep your pro shop clean and tidy. Do all you can to increase his sales.
2. Learn to do minor repair jobs such as weighing clubs, new grips, refacing woods and reshafting.
3. Remember to respect your pro. He is the man who will make you a success. You are his representative. Be loyal to him. If you are not satisfied with your job tell him, not the club members.
4. Treat his members and customers with utmost respect.

Pro relations with his assistant.

1. Teach him restraint in his personal financial problems. In other words, have him live within his income.
2. Listen to his personal problems away from his job. Try to advise him if possible. An assistant who is happy away from his work will be a better man for you.
3. Show him your method of teaching. Also have him watch you while you are giving lessons.
4. Teach him all the methods on buying so that if you are not on the job he can do some buying for you.
5. Pay him a livable salary.
6. Advise him to start an insurance savings plan.
7. Give him time off to play in a major golf tournament at least once a year. Do not include this as part of his vacation, but call it part of his work. Encourage him to attend some PGA meetings.