

Home Club Pros Make This Tournament Good Business

By KERMIT CHADWICK

V.P. Mississippi Golf Association

This year our second annual Gulf Coast invitation tournament was scheduled for the Great Southern course at Gulfport with \$2,000 prize money for the pros and \$1,000 in prizes for amateurs, following the success of the 1947 Gulf Coast invitation which we believe outlined a new pattern for tournament golf.

Last year our field of almost 200 included 46 professionals. This year there were more than 60 pros invited. None of them were tournament circuit professionals. They all were home club pros at southeastern clubs and despite the fact that they are more concerned with teaching than with playing their golf was not only interesting but of first class calibre. Mike De Massey of the Lookout Mountain course at Chattanooga won the initial event from a field of expert competitors.

Our professional invitations were limited to home club pros after discussion among Mississippi Amateur GA officials and Great Southern GA officials because we believed primarily that it is much to the advantage of amateur officials to give more attention to the service of the home

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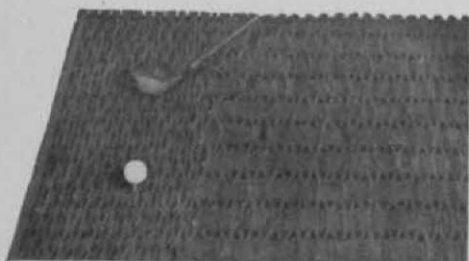
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club professional. We, as amateurs, don't expect the home club professional to do the scoring of the tournament circuit specialists but we do recognize the home club pros' need of friendly competition and meetings that will develop advances in instruction and business management at the clubs.

Introducing the tournament pros into such competition would be as unfair as introducing touring pot-hunters into regional amateur tournaments. Consequently we restricted our pro invitation list. Our policy was helped by the cooperation of the Southeastern Section of the PGA whose officials and members saw in this invitation event of ours an opportunity to bring their members together with some prize money as an inducement and to play and meet with amateurs who need to be educated to some of the pros' business problems.

Our amateur field, by the way, we regard as personnel that will prove highly valuable to the home club pros in spreading the message of pro study and work.

There is another phase to this pro meeting that has been carefully planned by George Cochran, of the Southeastern PGA and his associates. That is the teaching and business clinic this year. This we expect to have great effect on the amateurs as well as on the pros for the amateurs will

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be able to take home with them specific evidence of what the pros are doing to help golf.

Gulfport is a great summer resort as well as a pleasant place in the winter. We can use smartly directed advertising. We have had winter circuit tournaments. The nervous pressure shown by certain contestants did not sell us on the idea that our dealings were mutually satisfactory. When the prize money was raised and we were to be given mid-week days we withdrew.

And let me say that I most certainly do not censure the tournament professionals for getting all the money they can. However, in our case, the winter tournament of the stars didn't work out and it is undoubtedly just as well that it didn't. The tournament pros can go elsewhere for greater purses and we have been introduced to the home club pros of the southeast.

The atmosphere of the home club pro-amateur invitation affair is exactly what we want. The amateurs are 6 handicap or better. That gives us a wide range of amateur talent for our invitations.

We have found that the home club pros return to their clubs telling of the charm of playing at Gulfport and their messages to their members give us exactly the community promotion and advertising we want.

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