

Minnesota and Indiana Pros Meet to Study Business

By HERB GRAFFIS

Pro business clinics such as those conducted each spring by the Minnesota and Indiana PGA sections give the pros attending at least a month's start on their business. Problems that might not come under sharp scrutiny until the season was a month advanced are taken up, discussed and in some measure solved by these huddles. That's important in a comparatively short season business.

Frank McCormick, director of athletics, University of Minnesota, welcomed the Minnesota pros and manufacturers' men to Cooke Hall of the university April 5, and counted them in for a continuing and growing part in the state-wide development of golf through the university and high schools. This program is being handled by Les Bolstad, head of the university's golf. Bolstad had some of his students listening to the talks so they'd get a close-up of the pros' problems and how the pros are meeting them. It was smart propaganda work to have these university physical education students get part of the pro picture and go forth as pro publicity messengers.

Wallie Mund told his team-mates in Minnesota pro golf his methods of shop management, emphasizing that as it's the pay-off in the cash that's left after all the bills are paid, the score has to be kept on money all the time. Whether in long-range planning and operations or in provisions for inducing quick sales and harvest the net profit it's the dollar that controls operations of the pro department. The member or pay-play member is the No. 1 priority because he's the source of the dollars, the realistic Mund detailed.

Harold Sieg related his experiences in building pro shop volume. Sieg said that he'd put more than 400 all-weather grips on members' clubs in his shop which was picking up a sleeper in shop gross and as far as he could see the grip revenue hadn't reduced interest and sales in new clubs.

Tom Crane, PGA executive sec., gave a highly interesting description at the Minnesota meeting and later at the Indiana session, of national PGA work. Crane's appearances on these programs did much to explain to members that the organization is endeavoring to serve the club pro along lines advocated by GOLFDOM for

years and is not devoting an undue proportion of its money, work and public ballyhoo to the fraction of one per cent of its members who are tournament winners. Crane did not detail PGA financial status which seems to be the mystery that accounts for much of the criticism by rank-and-file members but he did say that in the postwar recovery of the PGA roster income is substantial.

The veteran Jock Hendry went into an explanation and discussion of golf rules. Minnesota pros were keenly interested. They have the conviction that unless a pro thoroughly knows the rules and is an authority on them he is deficient in a major essential of his qualifications.

O. J. Noer was the headliner in the discussion on "The Golf Course from the Pro Standpoint," during which Len Mattson and others presented turf troubles which had come to their attention. Noer's address contributed to the fine understanding that generally prevails between Minnesota pros and greenkeepers. Noer also spoke at the concluding dinner of the conference at which pros and officials joined in a relaxing evening at the Town and Country club. Totton P. Heffelfinger of the USGA executive committee and Herb Graffis, GOLFDOM editor, were other speakers on the dinner program which was a get-together in a light mood before teeing off on the season.

Lively Programs Pay Pros

Harold Clasen, in the afternoon session of the clinic, spoke on golf tournaments and events. Clasen said, "One of the important duties of a pro is to arouse interest in golf among his members and in this way make memberships more attractive. A good competitive schedule for all classes of players will prove very profitable to the pro." He urged that pros help committees arrange schedules of lively and comprehensive appeal and conduct the events. He distributed copies of his Northland CC schedule and sheets on which he gave details of his club's most successful events. Clasen also showed pictures and other details of methods he used in conducting tournaments.

Lee Harrington, Wilson Sporting Goods Co., gave a feature address at Minneapolis which he repeated in substance at the Hoosier pros' Indianapolis clinic. Har-

rington counseled creating a friendly atmosphere even before the member or pay-player gets into the pro shop. He advised study of members' social and economic positions in order that the pro take fullest advantage of knowing the customer better than the store does.

Harrington recommended careful study of sales for past few years and pre-war years in order that the pro could estimate his business for 1948 and budget sales and expenses accordingly. He emphasized that the turnover of stock be carefully watched so the pro's money investment be kept at work. He said that planning purchasing is as important as planning selling.

Harrington also reminded pros of what a wide spread there is in results of different methods of different pros at the same club. He cited cases of where difference in annual shop volume had ranged from \$3,000 to \$12,000 with different pros conducting the business at club to which he referred.

Keep Pro Capital Busy

Harrington advised that pros send out their advertising to reach members Thursdays or Fridays before the weekend play. He urged that pros make use of a "close-out" table of bargains so they'll get their invested capital back quickly and quit losing carrying costs on stuff that doesn't move.

On Saturday events such as blind bogeys and sweepstakes he stressed importance of giving entries full value; displaying the entry sheets and amounts of merchandise won. Entry lists grow when the members see they are getting their money back minus the pro's legitimate profit. He reminded smart pros that members are past the point of buying \$400 in tickets on a raffle for \$200 worth of merchandise. He told the pros to put standard brands of balls in ball machines.

Harrington also spoke of the importance of a pro budgeting lesson time so it won't interfere with shop business. He talked about the steadily growing importance of women's business. As an experienced observer over many years Harrington concluded that if a pro loses business to some other type of retail outlet it is the pro's own fault. The Minnesota and Indiana pros appreciated the frankness of the statement that followed Harrington's specific recommendations.

Herb Graffis, GOLFDOM's editor, expressed his belief that pros had done an excellent job of business development according to the teachings of their own experience but suggested that great advances could be registered by making more use of outside expert advice. He related discussions with numerous pros on program planning such as has been

done with great success in the greenkeeping short courses. The next step in pro business education, Graffis said, was to know people as the greenkeepers know grass. The great successes of older pros in teaching and merchandising was soundly based in their knowledge of people and psychology rather than in specialized knowledge of the golf swing or business methods. He added that, in his opinion, there was a tendency to go at the instruction problem hind-end-to and talk about "the mechanics of the swing" rather than acquire more basic knowledge of the mechanics of the swinger, as explained by anatomy and physiology.

Teachers Discuss Teaching

The latter point was brought out in bright detail during the talks and demonstrations of Arnold Chester on "Putting A Golf Lesson Across," on "Swing Technique," by Harold Sieg, on "Individual Differences in Golfers," by Willie Kidd and in the field house demonstration for Minnesota pupils by Len Mattson and other Minnesota PGA members. Chester advised adjusting the principles to fit the individual pupil, and to remember the pupil is a human being; not a machine. He advocated fool-proof exercises for the pupils.

Sieg and the veteran Willie Kidd put on a most illuminating demonstration of the pro's value in analyzing grip, stance and swing details and faults. Kidd showed how basic principles hadn't changed since he was a Scotch amateur headliner 45 years ago, but that the improvements, as far as pro play was concerned, were due to the stars being better able to analyze what they were doing and more successful in applying the fundamentals to their individual physiques and temperaments.

Willie said the pro's value as an instructor depended on the pro's ability to fit the methods correctly to the individual instead of making any one star pro a model.

Indiana's Program Crowded

Indiana PGA combined its annual spring meeting with a clic and dinner at the Lincoln hotel, Indianapolis. The program was spread over three busy days. Sunday, April 18, a business meeting was held in the evening after a get-together session at which "Red" Barton of Worthington Ball Co. was host. Monday morning Tom Crane, executive sec. PGA, repeated the fine informative story of national PGA activities he had given two weeks previously at the Minnesota meeting. Johnny Watson spoke on the great

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EDDIE BURKE TAKES A BRIDE



Eddie Burke and his bride, nee Doris Muriel Haufman of Port Chester, N.Y., hit the honeymoon fairway after being married at Sacred Heart rectory, Lake Worth, Fla., March 28. Eddie is asst. to Tommy Armour at Boca Raton in the winter. This summer he's at Woodbridge CC, New Haven, Conn., where Mrs. Burke will learn, as other pros' wives have, how it is to keep dinner hot while The Dear Boy is kept late on the lesson tee.

—Photo, Lou Koch Service

PROS STUDY BUSINESS

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progress being made at the PGA National course at Dunedin, Fla.

In the afternoon George Dawson of Spalding's opened the program with a very profitable talk on merchandising. Dawson pointed out that dissimilar conditions at clubs made each pro's stocking, selling and inventory control problem an individual one but that same basic principles of attractive shop, pleasant personality, business savvy and thoughtful financial operation governed.

Box Display Helps Selling

Dawson advocated keeping clubs displayed in handsome boxes. The clubs don't get knocked around and the selling magnetism of the boxes helps bring eyes to the clubs. He endorsed displaying clubheads as near as possible to eye level. He was strong for having prices displayed on all merchandise and said that brief information about the merchandise on tags attached to the goods helped sales a lot.

George said pros are making a lot of trouble for themselves and not helping sales when they talk too much about swinging weights and shaft deflections. Thus they often get customers confused and demanding clubs to specifications that only pro experts with the most delicate touch would request. Dawson also referred to the difficulties manufacturers have in repair and special order work. In this he was backed up by Harrington of Wilson, Bill Kaiser of Hillerich and

Hillerich and Bradshy and Bob Rickey and Stan Clark of MacGregor Golf.

The manufacturers' men agreed that much time, trouble and expense could be saved if pros would write full details in their first letter about repair jobs to be done and pack and address the clubs carefully.

Harrington repeated, in part, some of his Minnesota talk, but mainly spoke of factory manufacturing and repair work, going into detail about new construction ideas.

Kaiser emphasized that the manufacturers' salesmen are trying to help the pros because the pros are, in effect, the manufacturers' representatives to the ultimate consumer. For that reason, Bill said, the salesman is eager to have the pro know all that the salesman can tell him about the design and construction of the merchandise.

Close-up on Pro Credit

Rickey spoke of the manufacturers' problems in preparing and presenting a new line. Clark told of clubs being more interested than ever before in pro credit. Stan said that as he got around among credit men in other businesses he was able to brag about the credit of pros as retailers. He reminded the pros that when the credit manager extends credit he is loaning the pros the stockholders' money and if anyone thinks that's a casual matter let him try to borrow the same amount of money from any individual. Clark remarked that most of the credit difficulties pros have is the result of not answering letters and telling just what the situation happens to be. He said there are two parts of the sales dollar; the profit which is the pro's after he pays his operating cost, and the cost of the goods which belongs to the manufacturer.

Keith Muller of U. S. Rubber, who's been 20 years in Indiana as the U. S. representative, gave the pros pointers on ball merchandising. He told them to balance their inventories so they could turn their capital over often. He said the golf ball inventory should be turned over four or five times a season.

Keith said that in comparing the rapid advance in earning power in pro golf with that of young men in other businesses he thought the pro business was one of the best for an alert, diligent and bright young man. However he warned that it's no business in which anyone could expect to have a profit pushed into his hands. Now with a buyer's market returning the pro has to be on his toes as a businessman every minute.

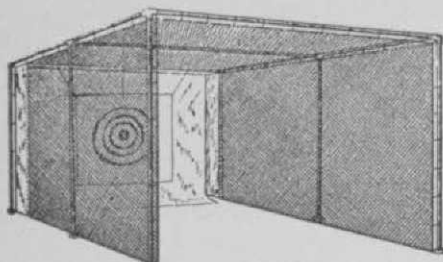
Indiana Pros in Teamwork

Stanley Graves, pres., Indiana Greenkeepers Assn., talked on teamwork be-

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tween greenkeepers and pros as a primary affair in improving club activities, hence the earning power of the man responsible for the course and the man responsible for the player. Stan told how his association's members regard helping each other with their problems as one of the great things that has elevated the status of greenkeepers with club officials and members. Warren Bevington, pres., Highland GACC, spoke on the pros' job in furthering cooperation between clubs for the extension of golf and putting clubs on a sound financial basis.

Cliff Waggoner, sec., Indiana Amateur GA, paid tribute to the pros' work for amateurs. The final afternoon was devoted to a teaching clinic. The dinner was held Monday evening with Rev. Eligius Weir, Mayor Al Feeney, George Soutar, Bill Fox and Herb Graffis being featured speakers.

About 80, representing all but a few of the Indiana PGA membership, turned out for the meeting which was briskly conducted by pres., Wayne Timberman and chmn., Louis Bola.

ARCHITECT AND GREENKEEPER

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The greens had been gently contoured without exaggerated grades which would cause a ball to gather additional speed on a downhill put. There were no locations in which a cup could not be placed. Both surface and sub-drainage had been well provided for. Care had been taken to eliminate all water pockets. Bunkers were placed far enough away from greens to allow for the passage of medium width power equipment.

Placing of fairway hazards had been left for future work, the thought being that they could be better spotted after the course had been in play awhile. The spots that caught poorly played shots were to be closely watched so as to determine the proper placing of traps. Bunkers misplaced serve no useful purpose other than added upkeep. To build them is a very quick simple job with the aid of a bulldozer, and is accomplished in a short time.

Watering Installation

A few words about the modern watering installation: Pipe sizes ranged from a 6 in. feeder main on down to 1½ in. lines at the tees and greens. Snap valve sprinkler heads were used at all outlets. The entire system was hoseless; it was possible to sprinkle nine greens and tees at a time along with six fairways. By the time the sprinkling attendant had set out his last head, the first settings were ready to be turned off.