

APRIL • 1949

How Much "Mind-Reading" Must a Pro Do?

By HERB GRAFFIS

Late last year a pro I thought was a good man and a hard worker was let go after several years at his club. I thought the fellow had received a rather raw deal but the more I looked into the case the more I was reminded of what a veteran New England pro — I think it was "Skip" Wogan — once told me. He said "To make good with your members you have to be a mind-reader, but that's not hard if you think of the members first."

On most pro jobs the officials and members haven't a clear idea of what they want from the pro. That's understandable enough. They're not pros and don't know how the job should be handled. Unless they've made a study of golf club operating they are hazy about what the pro should do. The pro has to do what they want done before they think of it.

Clubs differ so much that a major factor in a pro's qualifications for a job is his judgment in determining what the club needs. One club may need energetic promotion of golf activity to get all of the members playing more. This generally is the case. Pros who study records of number of rounds played by various members usually are surprised to see how many members don't play much more than 20 times a year at the club. With times tightening up a bit those members are going to be the first to resign.

At other clubs the older men who constitute the greater part of the membership don't want any more play on the course. As long as they are willing to pay it certainly isn't the pro's job to increase play so cost per member will be reduced. In such instances the pro still has a plenty tough job for those old gents are fussy about having good caddies available and

having a pro who can teach them in 15 minutes something that will enable them to win a couple of bucks from another old pirate.

Pro Gets "The Rap"

The pro may say the caddies are the caddymaster's problem at such a club, but the members don't think that way. They hold the pro responsible for the entire golf operation, except the course, and if the caddymaster isn't on the job, it's the pro who takes the rap.

With the caddy situation uncertain on account of the attitude of the kids and the widespread use of bag carts, the pro these days has more of a task trying to get the right answer to caddying than he ever had before — and that's true regardless of the competence of the caddymaster. Rarely is a caddymaster paid enough to attract a thoroughly well qualified man to the job. That means the pro has to handle any part of the job in which the caddymaster is weak. The pro doesn't have to be much of a mind-reader to learn if he listens to a few beefs from men or women members.

Lessons on Wise Basis

Certainly the pro doesn't have to be psychic to learn that in the lesson part of his business he has fallen heir to an illogical tradition which established the time for lessons at a half hour. Anybody who's made good as a golf instructor can relate many cases of having given highly effective golf lessons in five minutes; he may make a slight alteration in the grip or have the player move up or back on the ball in the address, and that's enough for the pupil to absorb in one lesson. The other 25 minutes are devoted to monotony or confusion.

Yet, with this situation being acutely

realized by pros and the pros knowing well that members who could make best use of lessons are scared away by the time demands, does the pro have to be a mind-reader to see that his members need education in their attitude toward lessons? The pro doesn't have to sell the member who is content to stay on the lesson tee for a half hour, and hour or longer. He has to sell the lesson idea to people who now think lessons are dreary but rather necessary performances, like paying income tax.

Or does the pro have to be a mind-reader in seeing where he could be discreetly helpful to committees, especially those responsible for preparing the club tournament schedules for men and women and mixed events. Of course the pro is expected to conduct these events and frequently sees the same winners week after week. If, without making any tactful suggestions for altering the nature of events to give the suckers a chance, can the pro wonder if the suckers have no particular concern about the pro's welfare?

Pro Shop for Member Service

For 22 years GOLFDOM has been pounding away on club officials with the idea that the pro shop ought to be at least up to the class of the rest of the club's appointments — and in the case of many small clubs, a whole lot better than the restaurant, bar, locker-rooms and show-

ers. The idea has caught on with officials and members.

The pro need not be a mind-reader of impressive qualities to learn that today golfers get around a lot and compare one pro shop with another as indications of the relative ratings of clubs. If a member or his guest comes into a pro shop that isn't up to the rest of the club the pro is going to be held accountable although the pro may be handicapped by an architect's errors of omission or commission.

Golf is a sunshine game, so golf selling must be sunshine selling. The darker and more unattractive the pro shop the easier it is to revolutionize by comparatively small expense in lighting fixtures which the local electric company will suggest, by bright paint, gay window drapes, soap, a broom and a dust cloth.

And for stock in the shop the pro doesn't have to read a member's mind deeply to learn that merchandise out of the member's price range won't move. When the pro himself goes shopping he wants to know the price on what he's looking at. The member's mind works the same way, but in too many pro shops the merchandise isn't price-tagged.

Without exception the most successful club pros are good practical psychologists who have the happy habit of being able to

(continued on page 93)

TAKING A SHOT AT THE NINETEENTH



This bar in grill room at Skycrest CC (Chicago dist.) is uniquely constructed and its beauty is commented on by members and visitors. But to Skycrest mgr., A. C. Perkins and bartenders it would be more beautiful if the bar were closer to the back-bar. It now calls for extra legwork by bartenders and lost motion in handling rush business of golfers at bar and those to be served at tables in the room.

dry areas will appear on the surface above the tile.

The spacing may be fairly close if necessary — even 10 to 12 feet apart. It won't make any great difference because the idea is to get the free water out. Drainage will not draw off the capillary water. Some like to put an inch of cinders or gravel in the bottom of the trench in which the tile is laid. It does facilitate laying of tile because the tile can be moved around to a true grade quickly. Some also like to cover the tile around the sides and over the top with cinders or gravel in order to keep the loose soil from running into the tile through the joints, and that's all right. But, the cinders should not be carried to within less than about a foot of the surface. Back fill the trench with the prepared surface soil.

In conclusion, let me add that I have tried to show that the drainage of a particular putting green is not an exact science; it is more of an art. Perfection in drainage does not depend upon engineering alone but also on soil physics, plant physiology, horticulture and agronomy. Greenkeepers know their turf problems better than any one else. Study each situation, and don't underestimate the importance of proper soil structure in the putting green.

HOW MUCH "MIND-READING"

(Continued from page 36)

get into the member's mind. These pros do all right by themselves by thinking of their players first. They quickly catalog their members and know what elements must be emphasized to appeal to the individual. One member may be shy, another may be show-offy, another have a driving ambition to win something, another just out to have some fun, another belonging to the club because his family wants club membership, another may be rich and tight, another may want to buy everything he can sign for but have a hell of a time paying, one may be a good fellow and another may be a complaining sour-puss who is one of the admission committee's mistakes. The pro has to be all things to all men, and — to all women who are active in the club's golf the pro's adaptability and finesse must be even greater than with the men.

Humans Are Simple

But golfers aren't so complex that they represent an unfathomable problem to the pro who thinks of them individually. That

The BURTON

"MOBILE"

A Bag Designed For Golf Cart Use

(Fits All Golf Carts)



HI-BALL POCKET:
Extra large ball and tee pocket in easy reach. No stooping, no fumbling. Zips open from top.

Big Boot Pocket:
Plenty of room for accessories and clothing.

Detachable Sling: Unnagging at top and bottom, — stores in boot pocket out of way.

Patented Bottom: Heavily reinforced for long life. Drag iron, nine tempered studs.

TWO POPULAR MODELS!

Model No. OP-1:—VYLAN plastic treated fabric, russet steerhide trim, full 9" ring. Tan.

\$2500

To your customers.

Model No. OP-2:—Rubber coated duck, VYLAN plastic trim, full 8" ring. Tan.

\$1500

To your customers.

(Both Models with Tuck-A-Way Inside Hood)

Send for Catalog on complete Burton line and price list.

BURTON MANUFACTURING COMPANY

JASPER

ALABAMA

individual treatment is a big part of the successfully handled pro job. It's simply a case of thinking of the other guy or the woman. The answer to handling the golfer is no more abstruse than the explanation the idiot gave when he found he lost a horse. You remember that old yarn of the dope saying he figured out what he would have done if he were a horse, doing the same thing, and there the horse was. If that policy works on a whole horse it will work on any part of same that happens to be represented in a club's membership. The pro is hired to get the right answer without requiring members to hand it to him. He merely has to out-guess the members and do it first. With what he should know about his job that should not be a difficult problem in mind-reading.

CONTROLLING FACTORS

(Continued from page 44)

mounts of Kentucky blue grass. Some architects included small quantities of south German mixed bent seed because it was the only type of bent seed available at that time. When the Green Section was formed, Dr. Piper advised seeding with Kentucky blue grass because it is the common turf grass in northern areas. The recommended mixture was eighty per cent Kentucky blue grass and twenty per cent red top to provide cover while the blue grass was becoming established. This combination was in common use for twenty years or more. Turf was reasonably good, provided it was not cut too close. The use of lime was frowned upon during that era. When Kentucky blue grass was used on strongly acid soil of low phosphorus content, it failed or the fertility deteriorated rapidly with the disappearance of the blue grass. Then weeds, poa annua, and clover took over. Kentucky blue grass never makes a dense, tight turf, so it is always hard to keep clover out of it. Generous fertilization and high cutting are the most effective means.

The use of colonial bent, mostly Astoria type, started with the development of large scale seed production in the Pacific Northwest. Seed mixtures for original planting, or for re-seeding, contained five to fifteen per cent colonial bent. The balance was Kentucky blue grass and red top occasionally with some fescue. The use of bent received a setback when chinch bugs started to invade fairways in the eastern part of the United States, because the bent grasses fared worst. Treatment with tobacco dust was

expensive, and none too effective. Now that DDT and Chlordane give good control at reasonable cost, the bents have regained favor. The tendency is to use the bent alone for reseeded during renovation of poor fairways because Kentucky blue grass and red top seed have become too expensive. Rates of seeding vary from 15 to 40 pounds per acre, and occasionally more.

The Astoria strain of colonial bent has performed well, especially when lots free from Seaside were obtained. Red tag and uncertified seed contain more creeping bent than the blue tag seed, and are less desirable for that reason. The Highland strain of colonial bent is being recommended by some. It is said to be more drought-tolerant than Astoria, because it grows on higher and dryer land in its native habitat. It has a different green color, and is said to be a trifle coarser in texture.

Creeping bents are considered least desirable because of their tendency to become matted and to produce a fluffy turf. Strains differ in this respect; Washington is especially bad, but Arlington (C-1) and some others produce excellent fairways. The development of desirable types is needed especially for use on watered fairways. Under irrigation, creeping bent grasses eventually take possession. Fluffiness can be prevented by frequent mowing and close cutting. The turf on creeping bent fairways should be thinned periodically by cross-discing, or by the use of the West Point aerifier, or a rotary hoe.

Another objectionable feature of creeping bent is its tendency to overrun the roughs along the edge of watered fairways. Players have a justified complaint about impossible lies when the ball is just off line. This strip of bent should be treated as semi-rough, and should be mowed a trifle higher than the fairway. Usually one round with the fairway gang is enough.

Bent on Unwatered Fairways

The notion that bent grass will not persist on unwatered fairways is general. The fact that patches of matted creeping bent die during periods of prolonged drought is the reason for the belief. Colonial bent and some creeping bent strains can survive long periods of drought. The unwatered fairways at Clovernook and Kenwood in Cincinnati contain a high percentage of colonial bent which has persisted for many years. The same is true at Camargo, even since watering stopped there. These fairways are well fertilized