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College Training for New Pro Careers

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In these days of specialization, where the college or trade school diploma is getting to be the rule rather than the exception, the golf pro stands almost alone among professional men unschooled in his profession.

During the years when most of the pros came up from the ranks of the caddies this lack of academic training was no great problem. Then the pro generally had several years of work in the golf shop behind him. He had been exposed to the many details of a club pro's job, other than playing and teaching golf.

But now most of the professional crop is being harvested from amateur ranks— young fellows who establish a reputation in amateur tournaments before turning pro. They are almost always first-rate golfers but when they take their first job they know little or nothing of running the golf shop, managing caddies, running club tournaments and the multitude of other things that keep a club pro busy.

What is the solution? Well, why not send the boy to college?

But first, the colleges must have something to offer him. Here is where the Professional Golfers Association could help itself and hundreds of young golfers who would take such training if it were available.

Why can't the PGA outline its ideas on a college course, then have the necessary textbooks written and interest the colleges in its plan of training golf professionals?

There is no reason why a young fellow can't go to college to be a golf pro, just like he can learn to become a lawyer, a doctor, an accountant or a golf course superintendent.

Professional golf is a lifetime work and an important one that is increasing in

importance as golf extends in popularity. To protect and expand the earning power of the pro there must be a more general realization of the extent and importance of his duties.

Now there is a trend toward thinking that the main qualifications for being a pro golfer is wanting to play golf for money. I read that there were around 300 applications for pro vacancies that were open at two large Eastern clubs. That is about 15% of the master pro membership of the PGA. Certainly the majority of applicants for those jobs were not qualified for competently handling the jobs right from the start, but isn't that something that should concern able professionals as much as it does the clubs? The number of applicants and the vagueness of pro qualifications tend to reduce pro earning power and job security.

The inevitable answer to making pro golf a sound career under rapidly changing conditions is education training and identifying the right men for the more responsible pro jobs.

A four-year course could be outlined with a major in physical education and a minor in golf. The first year and part of the second could be taken up with beneficial prerequisite subjects like English, letter writing, public speaking, elementary bookkeeping, salesmanship, psychology and manual training in woodwork.

Physical education courses in anatomy would also be helpful, to aid the student in understanding how the muscles work and how the mind controls muscular function.

Then the student could go into his courses in golf, where a PGA-approved professional would be the instructor. The pro-to-be would learn the methods of

teaching and playing the game. He would learn how to handle the golf shop, how to manage caddies, how to run tournaments, how to keep handicaps, how to repair and maintain golf clubs.

Lab work would be spent on the links where the student would be able to improve his game and learn the proper methods of teaching. What young golfer would object to lab work like that?

College Years for PGA

It might be a good idea for the PGA to apply these four years of college training to the five years of apprenticeship a young pro must now serve before becoming a full-fledged PGA member. That would leave him with a year of actual in-the-shop training to complete after he received his golf degree.

There are at least a dozen colleges in the nation already well equipped to institute such training. For instance, Minnesota, Michigan, Ohio, Louisiana State, Cornell, Stanford, North Texas State and others where there are college-owned and operated golf links and professionals coaching the golf teams.

Such a plan as this would not only help the young pro find a job; it would help the college draw more good players for their golf teams while opening a new type of college training that has been too long neglected.

Today there's many a young amateur with a sound game who expects to turn pro sooner or later. But his objective is an elusive one. He finds it difficult to train himself for his life's work, other than developing his game.

Let's send him to college where he can take a PGA-sponsored course. He'll come out a better pro for the club and for golf and the PGA will have a better member.

The golf course maintenance education available at Massachusetts State College and Pennsylvania State College, and in short "refresher" courses at other state agricultural colleges, has been tremendously valuable to golf in general and to the personnel in course maintenance. Pros have benefitted by adopting this idea and having pro department operating conferences in several states. They are significant advances in pro golf and show adjustment to modern conditions.

But obviously these sessions of a day or two are merely indications that the veteran master professionals who learned their business the hard way are keenly aware of the necessity of constant examination of professional operations in the golf business. To train men as professionals for the big days ahead in golf requires something along the line of the procedure of training for a Physical Education degree. And, furthermore, considerable schooling in business.

"My Greatest Day in Golf" Told By 51 to Darsie

"My Greatest Day in Golf" by Darsie L. Darsie published by A. S. Barnes & Co., 101 5th Ave., New York 3, 210 pages. \$3. Darsie for many years golf editor of the Los Angeles Examiner and of the Herald and Express, tournament promoter, and a veteran insider in golf, has done a most interesting job in getting together the tales of 51 noted American men and women pros and amateurs on the days they regard as most historic in their respective golfing careers.

Darsie has provided exciting and informative material in writing the leads to the various testimonies. As the book unquestionably will become an oft-used reference work it's too bad that minor errors have slipped through. Such cases as reference to "Palms Cica" course at Tampa and "Glen Vardon" at Fort Worth in the Patty Berg and Bob Hamilton stories, respectively, are mildly disturbing examples. As entertainment the book is one that will be given very high rating by all readers. The yarns of Willie Hunter and Jimmy Thomson are choice specimens.

A SALES TALK BY REVOLTA



Where the pro must convincingly demonstrate his right to be regarded as the top man in golf goods merchandising is in the fitting and selling of clubs. He got into merchandising by making and selling clubs and balls. Now he must retain, extend and strengthen his position by knowing all there is known about the design and construction of clubs, fitting the clubs precisely to the buyer and telling the buyer why the clubs sold are the best suited to the buyer's game and purse. Johnny Revolta makes a sales talk an interesting and instructive story for Betty MacKinnon, a sweet and shining star of girl's golf.