

Why The Members Think They Hired A Pro

By HUGH GORDON

Professional, Roanoke (Va.) Country Club

The pro is primarily the golf idea man at the club. It is the successful handling of this part of the job that keeps him on the payroll. But the scope of his work does need clarifying. He performs a good many services for his club as part of his role as local Mr. Golf, and a proper perspective of the relative importance of each would improve his efficiency and promote better understanding between himself and his club members.

The combination of businessman and sportsman that makes up a good pro is not too common. The club wants to hire a person who will be sportsman on the golf course, businessman in the shop, gentleman with the members, and yet will be uninterested or backwards in the club's social affairs.

And sometimes, it may seem to the club members that they have hired a pro who is uninterested on the golf course, a gentleman above the mercenary matters of the shop and a sport at the club's social affairs where he makes the ladies his business.

When I was pro at a fashionable resort, I frequently completed foursomes as a courtesy for guests at the hotel, as one does at any country club. On some of these matches our goodnatured policy of conceding short putts would be tightened, and I would find the other three watching me hole out with eager intensity. As we would walk from the green, my partner would say, "I had a lot of money on that last hole; glad you didn't let me down." Who does what for whom in this pro business, and who gets paid for it?

Trouble When Pro Gets Rich

One part of the pro's job, with or without his knowledge, is helping out the players to whom golf is just one more gambling device. Without setting the stakes, he may be ace or deuce to their big play. Some of these gamblers expect to pay all their club expenses with their earnings. If the pro bets high with them, and wins, there is ill will. He becomes the rich man, and so his salary should be cut. And no one respects the loser.

There is delicate stepping for the pro, who may seem to be the rich man, or the big hearted Joe; but must always be the golf idea man who knows how to make the game interesting with dime bets, and so

never gets himself into a position in which he can lose more than he can afford, or win enough to create envy.

That is one of the services the club hired the pro to give to the club members.

The golf pro is also the skilled laborer who works at his trade, the supplying and maintaining of golf clubs. He may hire assistants to do the work, or do it himself, but each tarnished club must be cleaned with care, to make the club worthy of its owner, his boss. The pro is hired for that work, and when you think of what sewer constructors and proctologists and pest exterminators do to earn an honest penny, it is mighty pretty work. The pro ought to be glad he can roll up his sleeves in a pinch and get the mud and marks off the clubs, and get the umbrellas dried and with the proper bags. He is not the sportsman in the gay shirt and fancy pants in the back end of the shop but the club hired him to do this work, or to get it done right.

Promotion Is Pro's Business

The pro is a sound business man and part of his job is the running of club tournaments. Every one has more fun if there is a big entry and there are events planned to give both high and low handicap players a chance to win. And there will never be big entries unless the pro gives them a boost to the uncertain golfer. That's why the club thought it needed a pro.

Handicapping is part of the pro's job. He, or his assistant, or a club member, or a club employee responsible to the committee chairman, may do the figuring, but the pro makes sure that the players are reminded to get their scores put into the handicap box. Whatever his actual part in the work may be, to the golfers he is the man who takes strokes off their chances to win in their matches. And the club wanted it that way or they wouldn't have hired a pro.

The pro has the cure for what ails the player's game. The swing may be too sick a thing for a radical cure, but the golfer can be helped to get more fun from the game. Clubs better suited to his swing, or to his changing physical capacity as the years go by, may be his medicine. The pro is the expert who can analyze the faults and give the kind of help the player can take. The club hired him because he had this special training and skill.

The pro knows the rules in golf. If he

(Continued on page 65)

ing off a typewritten set of by-laws and filing it with the secretary to be hauled out of a dusty pigeonhole and unwrinkled, if it can be found at all, in event some question arises requiring its inspection. The sensible way, and the safe way, is to have the by-laws printed in quantities sufficient to supply every member at the beginning and as often thereafter as may be reasonably necessary in keeping the membership informed.

As a final admonition, it is to be said that it is not only members of Country Clubs who must toe the legal mark in performing their obligation to the Club, or asserting their rights against it. The officials, too, have heavy responsibilities, enhanced by the fact that their relationship to the Club and its members is of a fiduciary nature. This relationship requires the ultimate of good faith on their part in handling Club affairs. They are absolutely prohibited by the law from doing anything in which they are personally interested that would be detrimental to the interests of the Club or its members.

Take one actual occurrence in illustration. A Chicago man hatched up a scheme that was a lulu. It called for the co-operation of seven kindred spirits, whom he lured into his net easily with the bait he had to offer.

In furtherance of the plan, this promoter located a tract of land suitable for a golf course, took an option-to-purchase, incorporated a golfing Club with himself and his seven associates as Directors, and sold stock to the public to the extent of \$300,000. Thereupon, the Directors sold the option to the Club for \$147,000, out of which was paid the actual purchase-price of the land, \$78,000, giving to the promoter and his willing associates, without any investment of their own money, the sum of \$69,000 personal profit at the expense of the Club and its stockholder-members.

The fraud soon came to light, and a court, at the instance of some of the members of the Club, required the unfaithful Directors to pay into the Club's treasury all profits they had made personally on the deal.

WHY MEMBERS THINK

(Continued from page 44)

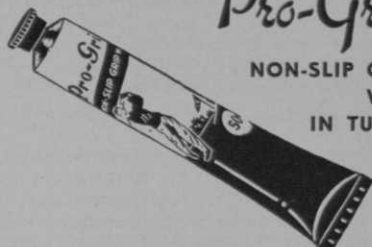
doesn't know all of them, he knows where to find them in a hurry when they are needed. He is the local law on golf. That's why the club hired him.

The pro is the club's golf business man. All his unpaid services to the members give him the right to sell them his wares in a proper shop provided by the club. This is a convenience to the players who get

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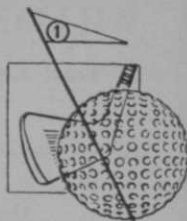
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expert help in choosing equipment from someone who knows their game and their golf habits. They buy from a merchant who is interested in selling them what they need and want, and holding them as customers; because their golf game as well as their golf equipment is his business. That's why the club hired a pro and built him a golf shop.

The pro is boss foreman to the hundred odd caddies in his charge. The caddie master may be directly responsible but the smooth operation of the caddie system goes back to the pro. The club chose him for his ability to handle the men and boys in his charge. He is a labor chief at the club. That's how he got the job as pro.

The club officials and members may not be aware of all the reasons why they hired a pro or the pro may not clearly realize what's expected of him. But when something goes wrong, then the pro learns what's expected of him. It's plenty.

MIDLAND COURSE

(Continued from page 48)

were brought in for green construction. There's been an extensive program of soil preparation followed in preparing greens, fairways and tees. Surface- and sub-drainage has been carefully planned and double-checked.

Artificial lakes and meandering draws have been designed into the layout so they look like nature made them.

The landscaping program started by making golf architectural use of largest of the mesquite trees native to the land and has been expanded into installation of 682 elms, cottonwoods and poplars fitted into the golf architecture and scenic planning.

Grau and Watson recently went on an inspection tour of the Midland job with Plummer and Fred Hogan and Jay Floyd of the club and the turf authorities are satisfied that this job already has made golf construction history in showing that recommendations of turf scientists effect the quick establishment of first grade golf

turf on what appears to be forbidding territory, and that the ultimate economy in cash has a long, long margin over the trial and error methods.

Another historic aspect of the Midland development is that three presidents and three boards have been in office since the project was begun yet there have been few alterations in the basic planning and the boys haven't drawn 6-guns on each other in labor-pain arguments. Roy Minear and Percy F. Bridgewater preceded the present president, Don Johnson, in office. Through the three administrations building has steadily progressed.

The club intended to construct a \$500,000 clubhouse but government building restrictions have forced indefinite postponement to that work.

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Alva Shaw and missus of the Shaw Lawn Mowing Equipment Co., Phoenix, Ariz., entertain the golf course superintendents and wives of the Phoenix area at annual dinner party. Guests of the Shaws for this occasion were Mr. and Mrs. Phil Hanson, Phoenix CC, Mr. and Mrs. Mike Perow, Mesa G&CC, Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Stanley, ass't. at Phoenix CC, Mr. and Mrs. J. Woodward, Arizona CC, Preston Childers, Phoenix Muny Course and Cecil Watkins, Wigwam Course, Litchfield Park.

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