

# Assistants Are The Problem

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The most important job for pro golf in 1953 is giving to members the high standard of thorough, helpful service the pros want to give, when it is so extremely difficult for the pro to get the required type of shop men for the money the pros can afford to pay.

Professionals at the great majority of clubs receive only nominal salaries and are expected to staff their shops for the service the members want and which the pros certainly want to give. The clubs generally pay the caddy masters, but they're the only ones of the pro department's staff of assistants the clubs usually do pay.

At any good club the pro is almost compelled to stagger the working hours of his help and that means the pro must now employ at least two more men than he had to back in the days when employees were agreeable to long working hours. The pro often starts teaching at 8 a.m. and finishes at 10 p.m. after helping handle the details of a tournament at the club. Every club member in business knows that he couldn't get his office or factory help to work those hours at pro department wages. Neither can the pro get his help to go for that long stretch which the pro himself must keep on the job.

To employ good shop help—ones who are competent, thoughtful, courteous, honest and who will give a 9 to 10 hour day's work, 6 days a week to members and the pro—you have to pay \$250 to \$300 at good metropolitan district clubs.

And to keep such employees you have to give them an all-year job. If you're in a territory where there is play most of the year the clubs expect that the pro shop will keep operating although sales in the fall and winter are very little, excepting the Christmas gift business which is being developed into a life-saver on the pro's books. So the staff payroll of a couple of assistants is about the \$6000 mark.

## Eating Up Income

Now it doesn't take higher mathematics to reach the answer that on such expense approximately \$15,000 of merchandise must be sold before the pro has the slightest chance of breaking even. Furthermore, before lesson income to any extent can be figured on for that part of assistant's time when he can be spared from the shop without lowering service

to members, the pro must make a considerable investment of time in the assistant. That all mounts up, and with greatly increased operating expense, the pro is being reminded more than ever before that his time is money.

A factor that neither the pros nor the members seem to recognize clearly these days is the decided improvement in golf instruction. Most of us who have been in professional golf for some years now can—and do—very frankly recall that the teaching we did the first few years that we were professionals was mostly of a catch-as-catch-can nature and that our pupils in many cases probably taught us more than we taught them.

In pro golf we don't go for that haphazard way of instructing instructors any more. The responsibility of teaching is too important and too exacting to allow giving any part of it to an untrained assistant.

The responsibility of good shop operation, of course, is sharply realized by pros, for the simple reason that if the shop isn't conducted correctly the pros won't make enough to keep them eating. But a pro can't be in his shop all the time. He must be everywhere at once—in the shop, teaching, conducting tournaments, cooperating with the course superintendent, the club manager, committee heads and club officials, keeping books, making buying trips to town and out of town, representing his club at tournaments and meetings, and in general keeping himself so fully occupied that he must have capable, trustworthy assistants.

## Members Are VIP

In this day and age when a person learns that he must work Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, plus the long hours of daylight saving time he thinks of the contrast between his hours and those of other workers and wants time off. When we older pros were breaking in we never thought of the hours, but that's not the case with desirable young men we're trying to get into pro golf now.

And the desirable young men we want are those who will work for the members, not those who want assistant's jobs thinking that such a job means playing a lot of golf and practicing without going to the expense of becoming a member.

As a professional at a fine country

club I want to, and must, give the best possible service to my members, courteously and efficiently. My members are Very Important People to me. Their visits to the club must be made completely pleasant so they and their guests will want to come often. At times, whether the members and guests realize it or not, I am slightly embarrassed because I am unable to give them the kind of service they should receive. The reason they don't get it is my inability to get adequate shop help of the sort I know I should have, at the wages I can afford to pay. My members are wonderful people. Perhaps I want to give them too much service but I think it's my duty to take care of them in the way I'd want to be served if I were a member and came to the club to get refreshed and entertained and served in a way that would balance the strain of high-pressure living today.

I am certain that the members will be expecting perfect service from the pro department in 1953 and that the pro who knows his job expects to give it; but how this service can be given in view of the shop staff employment conditions is going to be one of the most difficult problems the pro will have to solve.

While we're trying to arrive at the solution we professionals must give due consideration to the requirements of the assistants. Neither professionals nor club officials can look at the present situation in the light of "the good old days."

### **Fair Weather and Jones at PGA Annual Meet**

PGA annual meeting, to be held at Sheraton hotel, Chicago, Nov. 10-13, promises to be without political controversy and as another unusual feature will have Bob Jones as speaker in the instruction part of the Education program.

Horton Smith, Harry Moffitt and Harold Sargent will have only formal contests for re-election to positions of president, sec. and treas., respectively. Demands on time of PGA national officials and the problems of their offices limit the number, likewise the desire, of qualified candidates to undertake PGA official responsibilities at no pay and sacrifice of personal and club job time.

Financial problems will come up for considerable attention, with a recommendation for dues increase to be voted on. Since the PGA made a financial statement available for study by all members, the pro association is in better position to adjust its due to costs of its operation.

Revision of PGA championship procedure possibly will be discussed. There is also a chance that overtures of the Tamarisk club of Palm Springs, Calif.,

for a PGA championship as a winter event may come before the delegates. Informal talk among home club pros has favored the Tamarisk suggestion.

Tournament affairs at the time being are serene, with Harvey Raynor as tournament supervisor and Fred Corcoran as publicity man having no storms surrounding them. The PGA Advisory committee headed by Bing Crosby, and tournament sponsors will meet with PGA officials at Chicago. Manufacturers' representatives and PGA officials will be in session Sunday, Nov. 9. Much of the routine business will be handled in committee sessions starting Nov. 7, with committee reports and recommendations being submitted to delegates in general sessions.

Among other matters that may be talked over is that of revising membership requirements so the PGA can, if possible, avoid the embarrassment of the National Open champion not being eligible to first class PGA membership, as has been the case with Little, Middlecoff and Boros. A peculiar part of that situation is that it seems to take more time to train a home club pro to be able to competently handle teaching and other duties than it does to develop a playing star. With the newspaper publicity naturally featuring the playing pro the home club pro angle of PGA eligibility requirements are overlooked by the public.

The open door section of the convention, the Educational program, will present what Chmn. George Lake and fellow members of the PGA Educational committee are confident will be the most practical and profitable of these sessions which have been steadily growing in value to PGA delegates.

With Jones starring on the instruction end it is believed that there will be more accent on the pupils' than on stars' technique as Jones, at the 1952 PGA meeting, declared the pros would have to make their instruction more attractive and effective for the representative amateurs.

Among other subjects scheduled for the Educational sessions on Nov. 13 are assistant training, pro department business operations, mutually helpful relations with club officials, superintendents and managers, promotion and rules of golf.

PGA plans to send bulletins and guest cards to all clubs having PGA pros, inviting members to play PGA National course, now that course is getting in condition of which PGA may be proud . . . Emil Beck is chmn. of committee responsible for needed program of Dunedin course improvement . . . O'Grady now giving free junior lessons at course to Dunedin kids . . . Dunedin hoping to become location of PGA headquarters office.