

An Assistant's View of An Important Job

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With the cost of living going skyward and the endless climbing of prices and wages, it is seemingly difficult today for the golf professional to employ and keep an assistant for any period of time. An assistant's position is probably the most unnoticed, endless, thankless, and often underpaid job that any young man interested in a profession can undertake. He has to be honest, dependable and polite, with a clean-cut appearance, be a merchant and have enough golfing ability to develop himself into a first class instructor and player. After he has made good and learned the assistant expects that by hard work and with a good opportunity he can become a full fledged professional with a club of his own.

On many occasions, throughout the country, we all have entered golf shops when the professional was out and have encountered a boy too young and incompetent to supply the information desired or unable to tell the prices of merchandise in the shop. This is not only a bad reflection on the professional in the eyes of the members, guests, and salesmen who call but also indicates that he is not working his job to its fullest capacity.

The days of the pro making clubs as a source of income are in the past, with few exceptions and with the great demand for golf clothing and accessories, the professional has become aware that he has to be a first rate merchant. The merchandising job that a pro does at his club can only be as good as the assistant he has working for him. Inasmuch as the professional is often out of the shop more than he realizes, giving lessons or playing with his members, the shop responsibility falls on the assistant. In many of the smaller clubs the assistant is the important man in the operation of a well run golf shop. With all the different types of golf accessories and current price changes an assistant has to be on his toes at all times to give immediate service and accommodate the members and guests and be a genuine assistant to the professional.

What Marks Good Asst?

What determines a good assistant, and when that long awaited pro job arrives, how does he know that he is qualified to undertake the job? To be an exceptionally good assistant you have to go out of your way to learn more about the job than is absolutely required and with the thought in mind of trying to learn all you can not only from your present employer but others in the profession as well. For example: Inquire as to the various methods of keeping records and book-keeping systems and adopt the one that you feel the simplest and the most accurate. With present day taxes, shipping difficulties and price changes, this is a very important phase of golf shop management.

Probably the most important job of an assistant is watching the cleanliness of his shop and the arrangement of merchandise. This point can not be stressed too strongly as members are quick to notice a dusty shop, also one that has too much merchandise not displayed properly. Merchandise should be moved around in the shop at least once a week to attract customers and to give the effect that new merchandise has been brought in. Golf salesmen are also quick to notice a well kept shop and can pick out a good assistant in a short time by the way he conducts himself and the conversation he carries on with the members. The salesmen may have information or can recommend you for a pro job. It is important to have an assistant who is qualified to meet these various salesmen and on numerous occasions do the buying.

When an assistant shows a great amount of interest in the business of the pro he is working for he will win the confidence and respect of his employer and they can work together as a team by consulting each other on different problems that arise and suggestions that each may have, and will soon produce a shop that can be run smoothly, harmoniously,

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and profitably. Another important phase in the work of an assistant is gaining all the technical data the various manufacturers supply about their products. It is also beneficial and very educational if he has an opportunity to visit and be guided through a golf club manufacturer's plant.

One of the important factors in keeping a young man interested in his job as assistant, and sometimes completely overlooked by professionals, is the opportunity to get out and play with members. An assistant who is always on the course playing can not perform his duties and do a satisfactory job for his employer; however, there are teaching assistants employed by professionals, at most of the larger clubs where the membership is too great to accommodate the demand for lessons from the head pro. On many occasions you will find these assistants practicing between lessons or on the course playing quite regularly as their duties in many cases do not compel them to assist with the chores in the golf shop.

Many professionals have often remarked that if the teaching assistants were to spend more of their unoccupied time in the shop learning a little more about selling, merchandising, club repairing, etc., they would become better qualified as instructors and professionals. Another factor that is often overlooked and discussed among the members is the conflicting ideas that the pro and teaching assistant may have on the theory of golf instruction. The assistant must try and follow the same method of teaching as his employer, even if he disagrees. It is very confusing to the pupils if both teach with different ideas. For example: (Open and shut blades, right or left hand golf.)

It is to the professional's advantage to have a first class assistant as increased sales and volume business will permit him to pay satisfactory wages to the qualified man.

Wilson Sporting Goods Co. has attractive pro shop display card featuring record of 1952 National Open, PGA, Western Open, Masters and World's championship which were won with Wilson's Top Notch pro only ball.

Al Besselink is newest addition to MacGregor Golf staff. Henry Cowen, MacGregor pres., signed Al during the St. Petersburg Open.

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