

# Caddie-Masters Compare Their Work at WGA Meeting

THINGS are looking up for the nation's caddie-masters following the first Caddie-Masters Forum of the Western Golf Assn. April 20 at the Morrison Hotel in Chicago.

More than 50 of the men who have the responsibilities of recruiting, training and supervising caddies met and discussed mutual problems for seven hours and the conclusions reached should make golf more pleasure for the members, the caddies and their bosses.

Among the topics discussed were methods of recruiting, off season contacts with caddies, classification, discipline, group teaching, recreation, allocation of loops, carts, bonuses and fair employment for caddies.

For themselves, the caddie-masters asked that they should have their responsibility to the club's caddie committee chairman clearly defined and recognized as conflicting authority is a frequent cause of unsatisfactory caddie operations.

The forum, first of its kind in history, offered the caddie-masters an opportunity to iron out their problems on a national scale. And since caddie-masters are responsible for the recreation and employment of as many as 300 youngsters, the job is a highly important one. The discussions proved interesting and enlightening.

Regarding recreation for caddies before, between and after their loops, it was pointed out that softball is the most



Western Golf Assn. officials plan with caddie-masters. (L to R) Harold Moores, treas.; James L. O'Keefe, chm., Caddie-master conference; Stanley J. McGiveran, pres.; Cameron Eddy, vp. popular, although not the best because it is often too tiring. Approximately 98 per cent of the clubs allow the caddies to use the course at least once a week and some of them as much as five times a week at appointed hours.

## TV Keeps Caddies Content

But the fastest growing type of recreation is television. A recent survey shows that only two clubs in the Chicago area provided the caddies with a TV set in 1951. That number has since grown to 25 and is still increasing. TV, as a recreation is helpful, particularly in the Chicago area, because there is virtually always a baseball game to watch.

A very small number of clubs permitted the caddies to use the swimming pool, simply because it is also too exhausting.

In the matter of recruiting caddies,



Strictly business was the gathering of caddie-masters, some of whom are shown, during their 12 hour conference staged by WGA.

most caddie-masters employed the tried and true method of working through schools, the Boy Scouts, YMCA and various boys clubs for their prospects. Some advertising in newspapers, while others used a mailing plan.

One novel idea was uncovered. That is to invite the male high school teachers in the area to an annual party at the club and impress upon them the valuable training a boy can receive as a caddie. This proved extremely successful at one club where it was estimated that each teacher invited resulted in the recruiting of 20 prospective caddies.

Teachers are receptive to this method, too, when it is pointed out that a caddie may ultimately receive a college education through the Evans Scholarship Foundation, sponsored by the Western Golf Assn.

Most caddie-masters also agreed that classification of caddies is a sound practice. Nearly all divided their caddies into two classes, A and B, but a few used three, adding the Honor Caddie.

Group instruction also came under close scrutiny and it was recommended that squads of 10-12 caddies should be taught simultaneously. Caddie-masters stressed that the youngsters needed most instruction around the green. They suggested an hour and a half of instruction on the flag, stance and general conduct in that area.

On the allocation of loops, it was discovered that most clubs favor the "first come, first served" method. A few clubs use the merit system, where the boy who reports most often gets the most work. A few use a rotating method where a boy is first out one day, last the next and so on. Very few approved the draw method, where the caddies pull their positions out of a hat.

Caddie-masters were emphatic regarding the remuneration of their charges. It was generally agreed that where clubs use both the flat loop charge and the hourly fee, the caddie should be paid whichever is the larger. This was recommended to compensate the boys for waiting between nine-hole rounds.

The confab was regarded as highly successful, by the caddie-masters. It brought them out from behind the clubhouse and gave them the recognition they must have in helping to handle one of golf's most important problems. The character of men in attendance in itself was a plain indication that club officials are regard-

ing the caddie-master as a department head whose qualifications, work and payment must be in line with the clubs' obligations to the youngsters of their vicinities. Caddie-masters from major clubs from almost a thousand miles' radius from Chicago sat in on the day-long meeting, and attended a dinner with Western Golf Assn. and other association and club officials in carrying their discussions well into the evening.

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### Buying Habits Changing To Lengthen Season

The pro must become aware of the changing buying practices of the golfing public. The pro has believed that unless he did a big volume of business prior to July 5 he was going to be stuck with considerable merchandise.

We more or less accepted this as part of the pro shop operation and if we found ourselves with a big inventory on July 5 we feverishly started to unload and found that our stocks were so depleted by the latter part of August and in September customers didn't get stirred up to buying.

Experience in recent years had proved that August and September are extremely good sales periods and if a pro has a poor selection of merchandising (playing equipment and sportswear) during that period he will be losing a substantial amount of sales revenue.

—Emil Beck,

Black River CC, Port Huron, Mich.

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Bag carts are additional problems in pro shop operation. Very few clubs have adequate storage for bag carts and even fewer have ample space conveniently located. In many clubs it will be necessary, if it's not already, to have an extra man at work attaching and detaching bags from carts during rush hours. Work is slowed down in club cleaning and rearrangement of space for club cleaning of the cart-carried bags may be required.

Repairs of carts and replacement of cart parts are a growing factor in pro shop operations at numerous courses.

At clubs where pro shops are small, inconvenient and generally not up to the standard of other facilities of the club or of a type allowing pro service to be completely first class the required job of new construction will have to provide for bag cart handling and storage as well, along with other pro shop requirements.