

Pro Business Examined by Experts at PGA Meet

PRO department business amounting annually to more than 65 times all the prize money in major and minor tournament golf for a year got intense business-like study the first day of the 38th annual meeting of the PGA.

PGA Vp George Lake who is Chmn., Educational committee of the association, put across in this session the idea he's had of impressing upon club pros the fact that theirs is a leading sports industry and must be handled accordingly.

After overtures by Pres. Horton Smith and Vp Wally Mund, Lake brought on J. Edward King, Vp, Time, Inc., and Life magazine's Promotion Director Hudson Stoddard. They presented an illustrated review of National Golf Day, co-sponsored by the PGA and Life, and plans for the 1955 Golf Day.

King reported the receipts from 1954 Golf Day as \$128,795 in the U. S. and \$12,904 in Canada. Life picked up heavy tabs for promotion expenses. Participation in the event has grown each year but obviously needs better planning and operation on the club and pro ends. Organization is developing, with the Junior Chamber of Commerce outfits most active.

King presented a plan for having PGA sectional officials compile names and addresses of club officials whose cooperation in National Golf Day is essential. About 60 per cent of PGA members' clubs were represented in Golf Day last year.

The PGA-Life instruction and promotion film "Keep 'Em in the Fairway" had about 800 showings during 1954 in the U. S. and several foreign countries.

Betty Brooks of the Life promotion dept., together with PGA members, suggested that a woman champion play against women entries this year. Ed Furgol as National Open champion will be the man the 1955 field will play against.

National Golf Day probably will be spread over several days this year. Arrangements are under way to get the event scheduled on golf club events calendars prepared early in the year.

"Par for Pro Dept." Planned

Herb Graffis outlined the script for the PGA Educational committee sound slide film on "Par for the Pro Department."

Graffis told of interviews and correspondence with PGA members, manufacturers, salesmen and retailing experts in other fields in assembling the film material. He said that although every pro playing knows what par is for the course the pro doesn't definitely know what par is for his pro department operations, hence doesn't know specifically how to rate his performance.

He presented 18 points for "pro department par" which aroused considerable discussion among pros at the St. Paul meeting.

Among the outsiders' views of pro department operation which Graffis relayed was one of a prominent retailing authority who said he was mystified by the general pro shop practice of keeping under glass and difficult of access the balls the pros wanted to push as being best for their customers' play and most profitable for pros, while keeping the cheap balls out in the open, easy to reach and plainly priced.

The authority said that even under competitive pressure on lower grade ball sales it would be wiser for pros to give their top quality golf balls an even break in merchandising.

Pros Need "News Nose"

"A nose for news" as an important qualification of the successful club pro was described by George Edmond, nationally-known sports writer of the St. Paul Pioneer Press and Dispatch staff.

Edmond said that prompt telephoning or messenger delivery of scores by the pro or an assistant was a necessary routine but was sometimes neglected or carelessly handled. Papers do not always have sports section space enough to handle all scores but pros can learn what the papers can use by making friends with the golf writers.

Anything unusual in the way of golf news, even a hole-in-one under strange conditions, always is eagerly sought by sports departments and pros should keep on the lookout for such happenings.

Edmonds stressed accuracy in reporting scores and spelling names and giving details. Pro opinions as column material he rated highly.

He said that as a general rule the

morning papers preferred "spot" news material and the afternoon papers could use material in which the time element wasn't paramount. He cautioned pros to give all papers an even break. Edmonds also told how publicity on a "Diehards" tournament played in fall had extended the season in the St. Paul-Minneapolis district.

Watson Describes Course Work

Dr. James Watson, chief agronomist of Toro Mfg. Co., in a talk illustrated by colored slides, told of problems and advances in course maintenance. Watson briefly described features of the new grasses and new chemical treatments. He said that course design now was taking smarter consideration of drainage, machine maintenance, and larger tees to reduce expensive wear and maintenance.

Watson also said there's a need of beautification of courses. At the entrance of the clubhouse grounds is the place to begin better conditioning by beautification, he remarked. Spotting colorful umbrellas and chairs around the clubhouse grounds and first tee is advisable.

More frequent cutting of fairways instead of taking a 1/2 in. or more at a cut of fairways has resulted in turf improvement, said Watson. He also commented on improvements in watering practice.

Where the pro could help greatly in improving course maintenance by understanding the course superintendents' problems accounted for another valuable phase of the Watson talk. He said that the first three greens of many courses were damaged by players getting on them before the sun had removed the frost. He recommended that pros prevent this early play when frost was a peril.

Smart Ones Are Team Workers

Norman C. Johnson, Pres., Golf Course Superintendents' Assn., and supt., San Jose CC, Jacksonville, Fla., in speaking on "Departmental Cooperation at Golf Clubs" said teamwork between supts. and pros had greatly improved with common information and understanding.

He said that in his own work he'd always got along well with the pros at his clubs because he had a pretty fair idea of what they were up against in their operations and they knew enough about the problems of his job to appreciate that course maintenance was specialized and difficult work; tough enough with grass without having complications with unreasonable players.

Johnson recalled that when he was with

Tommy Armour at Medinah, Armour was a great help to him in getting acquainted with the advances and reasons for procedures and disappointments in course maintenance and in being a sympathetic interpreter of the superintendent's ambitions and obstacles.

Johnson remarked that the numerous duties of pros, superintendents and managers were so pressing and important departmentally that in a larger, active club specialists were needed in coordinated work. The smaller clubs with sharp budget limitations required combination job work that called for a considerable extension of the educational work of superintendents', professionals' and managers' organizations.

Kip Bowen, pres., Bowen and Hull, makers of Joyce golf shoes and distributors of other pro shop merchandise brought into focus the lessons of successful retailing to be applied at pro shops. The Bowen talk will appear in the February issue of GOLFDOM.

Dey Leads Rules Discussion

Joseph C. Dey, Jr., executive director of the USGA, presented the new USGA film "The Rules of Golf—Etiquette."

Joe said pros have a prime responsibility as paragons of sportsmanship in line with the high traditional spirit of the game. Any pro who is guilty of bad-tempered conduct or loss of self-control isn't "colorful" but is disgusting to men, women and children who know the true spirit of golf and disagreeably discouraging to those new to golf, Joe said. Furthermore the offending pro has a definitely adverse effect on all phases of all well-conducted pros' business, the USGA official declared.

Dey got Warren Orlick, Horton Smith and Bill Jelliffe on the platform as a panel to consult the Rules of Golf book in answering rules questions. Joe pointed out that one trouble in citing the rule that applied was that many didn't take any basic training in where in the book to look for the right answer.

One rules problem presented by Jimmy Thomson of Spalding's remained unanswered by Dey and the panel, after much discussion. The answer eventually will be forthcoming from the USGA Rules of Golf committee.

Thomson's case: Both players were playing balls of the same brand, number and color marking. Both players sliced. When the two balls were found one was unplayable. To which player did the un-

playable ball belong.

Some suggested the two players go back to the tee and drive again but while that might possibly be O. K. in match play the interests of the rest of the field wouldn't make the solution acceptable in stroke play.

McMorris Shows New Film

Rex McMorris, director of the National Golf Foundation, made the first public showing of the Foundation's new colored, sound slide film, "Community Planning Gets a Golf Course."

The film, being used by and on community groups in showing how to promote public golf courses, received strong approval from the pros, several of whom requested it to be used in helping men in neighboring communities who'd asked the pros how to go about starting a municipal course. Loan of the film, free, may be made by writing McMorris at National Golf Foundation, 407 S. Dearborn st., Chicago 5.

Frank Chase, sales mgr., Multiclean Products, gave the pros practical and inspirational advice on their outlook on their market. Chase said the pros, like other salesmen, must constantly improve because competition is constantly getting tougher.

He asserted that the American public doesn't "buy" a higher standard of living, it has to be sold to them.

Pros Sell "Want" Satisfaction

Howard Longstaff, professor of psychology, University of Minnesota, told the pros that they are not primarily selling any product but selling what the product will do in satisfying a basic want.

The "secret" of selling success, said Longstaff, is the same for General Motors and a pro at any club or course—find out what the golfers want and what they don't want.

He suggested that a pro get a book with a page for each man on which should be listed that member's likes and dislikes and what the member wants, whether the member happens to be aware of that want or not.

That intensive study of the pro's market plus full knowledge of the products the pro has to sell would increase any pro's business, Longstaff forecast.

Golfers Entitled to Cooperation

Thomas C. McGuffey, pres., Club Managers' Assn. of America and Mgr., Missouri Athletic Club, St. Louis, in considering the relations of the club manager, the

professional and the supt. reminded his hearers that the club officials and players have a right to expect complete cooperation and loyalty from department heads.

A club itself is based on the idea of cooperative ambition and effort. McGuffey remarked that every first-class man he knew in club management, pro golf and course maintenance has such pride in his work he appreciates all the friendly and competent help he can get in making his performance perfect. Hence every good man heading a club department regards his teammates heading other departments as valuable aids in his own achievement and thinks of his own responsibility in helping his associates.

Each department head is bound to hear some comment by players that is of interest and constructive help to other department heads and it's part of each man's job to have such understanding friendliness with his associates that these comments, even if critical, can be passed along to the man directly concerned.

Some complaints around clubs may be merely bad-tempered or informed belly-aching but taking care of those gripes is part of every executive's job. The pro and the supt. don't need to think they are victims of unwarranted complaints any more than the manager is, McGuffey reminded the pros.

He said there had been a great advance in teamwork as the result of the Club Managers' Assn., the PGA and the Golf Course Supts' Assn. helping their respective members to increase their usefulness and understanding.

As a little tip from the managers McGuffey related that in clubhouses Saturdays, Sundays and holidays he'd heard too frequent complaints about the scores. He suggested that supts. and pros see that the courses played easier on the big days.

Western Golf Assn. Makes Golf Car Survey

Western Golf Assn. is making a survey on golf car use.

Questions asked of WGA member clubs include how many cars at a club, kind of ownership, rules governing use of cars, charges for car use, maintenance and storage, and effect on the clubs' caddie programs.

In 1956 the Women's Trans-Mississippi goes to Monterey (Calif.) CC; first time for the womens Trans in this area.