

Club Fitting Calls for Study of Golfer's Physical Equipment

By JOE E. DOAN

A PRO has got to know how to fit clubs correctly before he is qualified to hold a first class club job.

But to learn how to fit clubs is a problem that bothers many professionals. Nothing in the way of formal education in this subject has been provided since bench club making became practically extinct. When a fellow worked at making hickory-shafted clubs he learned how to fit each club to its user. Now, to learn this art and science, the younger professional or assistant has to get what he can from the experience of the older pros, from studious observation of players on the course and on lesson tees, from manufacturers' salesmen, from visits to the factories of companies making clubs and from trial and error.

GOLFDOM receives many letters from ambitious young assistants and pros asking how they can learn club fitting. There isn't any short, correct answer that can be given. The PGA is considering having instruction in club fitting as one of the subjects in the winter school sessions for pros and assistants that it conducts at the PGA National club at Dunedin, Fla. Nothing definite has been decided on that program at this time.

So the young man in professional golf now has the important job of educating himself in club fitting. If he doesn't do this he doesn't know how to order stock that

will fit the requirements of most of his customers and, even though he does know about material, workmanship and design that determine club value, he doesn't know what clubs will be right for each buyer.

The importance of expertly fitted clubs is made plain by a line that Tommy Armour has in his best-selling golf book. It should be prominently displayed in every well-qualified golf professional's shop: "Properly fitted clubs are the only part of improved golf that anyone can buy."

Armour has them coming from Britain and the Continent and all over the United States to take lessons from him and says that too many of these golfers could play better golf if they stayed home and used lighter clubs. Hogan also figures prominently in setting the trend toward lighter clubs by saying that he prefers to use a club that he can control instead of a club that controls him.

Works on the Circuit

Although some of the newer professionals and many thousands of the ordinary golfers don't realize it, there are at least five younger stars on the tournament circuit who began to get rather consistently in the money only after they got clubs that really fitted them. This fitting was the result of studious attention by factory men of the companies with which the young playing pros were connected.

Expert club fitting service is worth money to the club buyer and means a lot financially to pro shop sales inasmuch as it is a service that stores can't supply.

Experiences of some older pros that help younger men have been related to GOLFDOM. We'll be printing these helpful comments from time to time and will start with the remarks of Wally Mund, for years pro at Midland Hills CC, St. Paul.

Mund says: "About seven of ten players you can fit accurately by watching their swings and studying their physiques. The other three may call for a little experimentation. Usually a pro has enough of a variety of old or new clubs around to use

Pro Comment on Fitting

Armour: Many persons would play better golf if they used lighter clubs.

Hogan: Teach them to control and not be controlled by the club.

Mund: Is the shaft too stiff? Is the head too heavy?

Novak: Middle age means a fellow can't do it alone. He needs help from his clubs.

Ciuci: The average golfer should be fitted with clubs that can be controlled with a finger grip.

Old Habit: Metropolitan PGA Pros Re-Elect Inglis



Metropolitan Section PGA members are shown at a recent meeting at the Hotel Park Sheraton in New York where among other things they re-elected John R. Inglis, Fairview CC, Elmsford (4th from left, bottom row), pres. for the 28th time. Other officers and directors are: Fred Moore, Angelo Mainero, Pete Cassella, R. C. MacDonald, Joe Phillips, Elmer Voight, Al Renzetti, Joe Mazziotti, Fred Grieves, LeRoy Jones, Fred Annon, Herman Barron, Jack Sabol, Ralph Leaf, Al Ciuci, Toney Tiso, Alex Ednie and Harry Monteideo.

for demonstration in these puzzling cases.

"Fairly often a pro will find that some trouble that stays with a pupil is caused by the clubs rather than by the swing. One of my pupils, a very good player, suddenly developed a spell of wildness. I tried almost every possible way to get him shooting consistently straight. After several other experienced professionals and I had failed to solve the fellow's problem I got him to practice and play with stiffer shafted clubs. That did the business. He was a strong young man.

"Frequently when a player is in his early 50s and develops trouble it's because the shaft is too stiff; maybe because the head's too heavy."

Joe Novak, Bel Air CC (LA dist.) pro and former PGA pres., some time ago said that if and when pros were able to get club fitting strongly emphasized as a pro service the pros would be doing a great thing especially for members who are around 50 years old.

"The golfer who is a little past middle age and who has been a strong and active man at golf and other sports when he was younger eventually comes to the day when he needs more help from his clubs," said Novak. "Actually the pro to be of greatest usefulness to his members should insist on most of his players changing to better fitting clubs when the players' muscular fitness changes."

Al Ciuci, pro at Fresh Meadow CC (NY Met dist.), says: "The professional must give attention to teaching his assistants how to fit clubs by pointing out details in the

physical equipment of the player and his type of swing that calls for certain specifications in a club.

"Then, when the player decides to get a new set of clubs the assistants and pro will know exactly what the player needs and whether it is in stock or will have to be ordered.

"The fast swinger almost always needs a club with a light head and a stiff shaft. The older fellow who doesn't have a full swing needs some weight in the head and plenty of feel in the shaft to get distance and snap into his shots.

"The average golfer is a pounder instead of a swinger or hitter. He needs weight in the club to get results but he shouldn't have the club so heavy he can't keep it under close control with a finger grip.

"The grip sometimes may need a bit of alteration if the player holds the club with an interlocking grip. Then the club's grip possibly should be built up a little so it's thicker at the top.

"The majority of golfers have arms about the same length as you'll find when you measure how far the tips of their fingers are from the floor. But when you've got a short-armed player you should give him a club with a longer shaft so he will get a good-sized arc in his swing.

"Every order a professional places for clubs should be with the specific needs of his players clearly in mind. The manufacturers have in stock top grade clubs that will exactly take care of probably 95 per cent of all golfers."