
The ASSISTANTS' DEPARTMENT

Three Pros Tell What They Expect of Assistant and How to Train and Encourage Him

THREE pros, Warren Orlick of Tam O'Shanter CC, Orchard Lake, Mich., Louis Bola, Highland G & CC, Indianapolis, Ind., and Tom Fry, San Mateo, Calif., Municipal GC, take over this month's Assistants' Department to give their ideas as to what makes an assistant valuable to the master pro, and what should be done by the pro to educate, encourage and reward a deserving assistant.

Loyalty, personality and responsibility head the list of qualities the three men think are most desirable in an assistant, while all agree that the pro can best encourage his assistant by giving him the opportunity to learn every phase of pro shop management so he'll be ready to step into a more lucrative job when the chance comes.

Loyalty Works Two Ways

Warren Orlick thinks his assistant should be loyal above all other things. In his estimation, this means that the young man should be willing to forget immediate aspirations and concentrate on doing the best possible job for his employer. In turn, the pro has responsibilities in this respect. If he makes certain agreements with his assistant, such as allotting him a certain amount of playing time during the week, it becomes his obligation to live up to the agreement. Occasionally, the press of business interferes with this arrangement although Orlick feels that probably too many pros too often use this as an excuse to avoid going through with such agreements. The result is that the employee is inclined to become disloyal.

The Orchard Lake pro expects his assistant to take over and smoothly run the shop while he is absent and to be able to settle members' complaints without re-

ferring most of them, and particularly minor ones, to him. He also believes that the assistant should make every effort to become a walking encyclopedia on golf rules. Orlick holds regular sessions with members of his staff to make sure they are familiar with changes in the rules and are aware of the latest decisions and interpretations covering the entire rule book.

An assistant's education at Orchard Lake begins with teaching juniors. After he has learned Orlick's method of instruction he is graduated to instructing older golfers. At the same time he is familiarizing himself with all operations of the pro shop and sitting in at club committee sessions in order to learn everything possible about conducting tournaments and working with the maintenance department.

Orlick encourages his assistants to get out and take part in state and district tournaments, feeling that these competitive ventures play a big part in a home club pro's education. Last year he persuaded his club members to finance assistant Gene Bone's tour of the tournament circuit. Bone was also dispatched to Chicago to take part in the George S. May tournament because he was playing excellent golf at the time and Orlick was anxious for him to get a chance at breaking into the big money.

Votes for Personality

Lou Bola, who presides at Indianapolis' Highland club and doubles as pres. of the PGA, Indiana section, thinks that personality is the most important ingredient in an assistant's makup. Lou doesn't confine this merely to mannerism or the degree of enthusiasm a young man shows on the job. He feels that it takes in appearance, manner of dress and the way in which the assistant handles himself in dealing with



At 10th Annual Southeastern Turf Conference

A review of the organization's research record and the development of Tifgreen, the new hybrid Bermuda grass, were the most discussed items on the agenda of the 10th annual Southeastern Turfgrass conference held in Tifton, Ga. More than 200 persons attended the three-day meeting. Post-session discussions occupied most of the turf specialists who attended the conference, as the above picture shows. In the group are (l to r): T. M. Baumgardner, landscape architect, Sea Island, Ga.; B. P. Robinson, Southeastern USGA green section director; Jimmy D'Angelo, Dunes Golf & Beach Club pro, Myrtle Beach, S. C.; G. W. Burton, principal geneticist, Dept. of Agriculture; Frank Ward, vp, Florida Turf Assn.; Gene C. Nutter, agronomist, Florida Turf Assn.; and Hugh A. Inglis, Athens, Ga.

members. He sums up by saying that if the budding pro combines personality with a real desire to succeed in the golf profession, he can make a very comfortable living and enjoy doing it.

As for educating the assistant, Bola has this to say: "If the pro sees fit to hire a young man, he certainly shouldn't neglect his education. I try to give him as much time as possible showing him my teaching methods and when I feel that he has assimilated them, I ask our members to take lesson from him. Inside, I make every effort to give him thorough training in salesmanship, service, buying and bookkeeping because I want a competent employee to run the shop when I'm not around.

"As I see it," Bola concludes, "the assistant should be groomed to take over his own shop when the opportunity comes. Older pros gave me a lot of help when I broke into this game and there's no reason I shouldn't pass along whatever knowledge I have to the young man who is breaking in."

Tom Fry of the San Mateo Municipal course opines that if a newcomer to the golfing profession is endowed with all the attributes that should make him a great pro, but won't assume responsibility, he is not going to succeed.

"As far as I am concerned," says Fry, "that is the real test. I want assistants around me who can take the responsibility

of making decisions and are not constantly looking to the boss to do their thinking for them. I want my men to be good salesmen, expert repairmen and, in general, handle all their duties both inside and outside the shop with the personal interest they'd show if they were running their own businesses."

Is this too much to expect?

"No," says Fry, "not if you are willing to spend some time training your employees and building up their confidence to the point where they know they can do everything around a pro shop. It's the fellow who is poorly trained," Fry adds, "who hesitates in making decisions or taking responsibility. If you have an assistant in your department who can't be depended on to fill in when you're absent, don't put all the blame on him. Look to your own shortcomings. He's holding back because you haven't taught him enough about running your business."

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