

It Works Two Ways

## Pro Reminds Himself of What He Owes His Members

WE have a lot of talk among our club officials about an article in March Golfing magazine, entitled, "A Lesson in Being A Golf Club Member."

The article discussed the member's obligation to deal with the pro, who must make money so he will be able to serve the club as the club desires, and as the pro wants to serve it if he is a first class man.

I was, of course, very glad to have my officials take so much interest in this publicity to improve pro business. They agreed that copies of the article should be sent to each of our members.

One of our directors, a fellow with whom I went to high school, tells me what goes on at the board meetings. It has helped me do a better job for the club than a pro ordinarily is able to do when he is working in the dark as to the general picture.

### General Education

When I was telling my friend that I appreciated the help I got in mailing the Golfing article to our members, he said: "That piece of education wasn't entirely intended to help your department although it looked that way at first sight. The whole club operation needs members who know how to be members. To tell the truth, quite a few of our members don't have much of an idea that being a private club member calls for something more than paying dues and holding liquor reasonably well. They've got to learn how

to support the club or the club won't have prestige or volume and character of business needed to make it an efficient operation.

"In other words, there is no reason for belonging to a club unless it is a success.

The professional at a first class private country club in an eastern city wrote the accompanying examination of his business position in relation to the understanding between his members and himself.

His candor makes it advisable that his name not be used.

Professionals, to whom Golfdom showed advance proofs of this article, say it's the best advice they've seen about the wise pro looking at his own position and considering his obligations to his members in setting them a pleasant example.

To make it a success requires the informed cooperation of every member," said my friend. "This cooperation isn't an easy thing to get because belonging to a club costs money and any number of our members have expenses that come ahead of club bills."

We got talking about individual cases of probable incomes and expenses of the members and mentioned a man who had a big domestic appliance business.

My club official asked me, "Have you

ever done any business with him?"

I replied that I had.

"Did you pay straight retail prices like his other customers?"

I had to answer that I didn't.

"Do you buy 'wholesale' every chance you get?"

I had to answer "yes" to that.

"How much of the golf stuff that our members buy do you think you sell to them out of your shop?"

"It's hard to tell. Somewhere between 80 and 90 per cent," I guessed.

"Considering that so much buying is done at trick discount houses and at wholesale as a general thing, and that you yourself buy wholesale, I'd say you are getting a pretty good break from the members."

That put a different light on problems that have been bothering me and other pros, problems that have been especially troublesome the past few years with the increasing cost of operating a pro department, the smaller net profit and the higher living costs of my family and myself.

### Worries Love Company

It struck me that my worries probably have been the same as those of the majority of my members during the last few years of inflation.

I got to thinking that when I had to buy something at home that cost what a set of woods and irons and a bag costs at my shop, I might not show the same loyalty I expect my members to have toward me. I wasn't willing to pay the retail prices to one of my members for things I needed, but would buy them 'wholesale,' especially when that's so easy to do these days.

Then, all of a sudden, it dawned on me that what I have suspected so long is the absolute truth. My members are a grand bunch and deserve everything I can possibly do for them in expressing my thanks for the way they stand by me.

Certainly, some of my members buy golf goods elsewhere. But why?

They didn't think much about it. That means I didn't become close enough to them for them to think about me when they were thinking about buying golf equipment or accessories.

Another reason is that they believed they couldn't afford my prices. Maybe that means I haven't done a good job in convincing them that my quality type of merchandise is really a bargain over the period it will be used. Perhaps I should



### Sweetness in the Desert Air

Knowing that GOLFDOM readers appreciate, and what's more deserve, an occasional change of pace, we're slipping this photo into the April format for your edification. It comes from the Desert Inn CC where the Tournament of Champions will be played Apr. 18-21. It takes some imagination to figure how these figures figure in a golf tournament, but you have to keep in mind this is a buildup for the event. Tal Tribble of Chicago (he's the fellow in the center) is buying a carload of tickets, and if this adds up to high-pressure salesmanship, you're probably saying, "Let's have more of it!"

have more of a price range in my shop stock, or should have a time payment plan. I'm not sure. I've got to do some more thinking about that.

### Compromise Is Costly

I do know that a great danger to pro business right now is offering golf merchandise of a sort that can be bought for considerably less money through other retail outlets.

I also know that the golfers aren't going to be enthusiastic about merchandise that offers more profit to some pros but at the same time costs the golfing consumer more.

Then there is another class of members—very few of them, luckily for me—who are just simply tight.

Nothing but money means anything to them. Maybe I can cure them with kindness. Anyway, I'm not going to be cool to them and not give them a chance to change. They're human beings and club members. I know some pros who are as

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## Municipal Lease

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or in a fair percentage of the invested capital in a period of stress.

16. Payment should begin at the point where estimated profits begin; a minimum payment may be desirable.

17. No payments should become due until income begins; a little extra time at the beginning of the lease costs little and may be a great factor in aligning cooperative interest.

18. Provisions for securing an operator should be based on operational experience, knowledge of the whole of golf course and club management, on character of the lessee; not primarily on price bids.

19. Time may be extended in the lease in place of capital outlay in any reasonable amount.

## Pro Has Obligations

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cheap as the few cheap members I've got.

When I reviewed my situation — my members and their attitude toward me and my business, and my own attitude toward them as customers — I recalled something said by an old Scot who gave me my first job as his assistant.

The great, old fellow remarked: "Blame somebody else for what is your own damn fault. It saves you the strain of getting smart."

The way I now look at this matter of members' loyalty in buying from me is to think first about what special things I have done to deserve and develop buying loyalty that makes mine such a good business. I'm emphasizing the importance of this attitude to my assistants.

I am confident that it will mean better business for me and for the club and more enjoyment for the members.

## Canadian Open

The Canadian Open Championship, scheduled for July 10-13 at Westmont G & CC, Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont., will be held in conjunction with the centennial celebration of the city of Waterloo and Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, Ltd. Seagram has raised the prize money to \$25,000 to keep the Open in the big tournament class.

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## Lean Over Backwards to Avoid Elimination in Flying Hills Blind Bogey Tournaments

There's a great deal of enthusiasm for the blind bogey tournaments Frank Rodia stages for his members at Flying Hills GC, El Cajon, Calif. It isn't unusual for as many as 400 or 500 clubswingers to get into the events because it's tough to get eliminated, there is a lot of fun involved and Frank makes things even more interesting by offering a substantial supply of clubs, shoes, sweaters, etc., as prizes.



Frank Rodia

The blind bogey usually runs over a period of four weeks. Players pay an entry fee of 50 cents and choose their handicaps so that their net scores will fall between 70 and 80. At the end of each week a number between 70 and 80 is drawn and all players having the same net as the number drawn, qualify for the final playoff. A player may enter the tournament as many times as he wishes, taking a different handicap for each occasion if he cares to, in order to qualify for the playoff.

On playoff day survivors play an 18-hole blind bogey round. On this occasion, handicaps also are chosen before starting time, a number between 70 and 80 is picked out of the hat, and players with nets that match it become finalists. An 18-hole putting contest decides the winner among the finalists. There are plenty of consolation prizes to salve the wounds of those who don't quite reach the final putting phase and, of course, all finalists are handsomely rewarded.

## Housekeeping Hints

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Each green has its own border landscaping. Rises about the greens are gentle. The bunkers of yesterday are out of place. The harsh lines of old age have given way to the fine contourings of youth.

This contouring of the shoulders of the greens and traps is the essence of the modern course. It is the golfer's challenge. It directs his play, yet challenges his skill and determination to accept a problem and solve it as adroitly as possible.