



FIRST PGA SCHOOL FOR ASSISTANTS MAKES BIG HIT WITH YOUNG PROS

Emil Beck, PGA's
dean of men

A NEW venture in education by the PGA, which established a five-day training school for Assistant Pros at its Dunedin, Fla. headquarters early this year, was termed a smashing success by practically all of the 93 young men who attended the course. GOLFDOM'S survey of opinion among these youngsters, several of whom travelled nearly 2,000 miles to attend the 22-hour course in subjects ranging from club fitting to pro shop merchandising, reveals that "Human Relations," was considered to be the most important topic discussed. But this did not necessarily dim the interest of the assistants in absorbing new ideas on instruction methods, club repairing and a half dozen other subjects which were discussed.

Dean of PGA's first Assistants' school was Emil Beck of Pt. Huron, Mich. His faculty included George Aulbach, Houston, Tex.; Bill Hardy, Washington, D. C.; Art St. Pierre, also of Pt. Huron; Willie Ogg, Albany, N. Y. and Joe Devany, Grosse Isle, Mich.

Following are comments by 12 assistants on the merits of the PGA course. A second article in the June issue of GOLFDOM will tell what other assistants learned in their five days at Dunedin.

Rollie Wildman, Green Gables CC, Denver, Colo. — First of all let me say that the PGA officials who thought of setting up the Assistants' Training School are to be commended for being very progressive individuals. It shows that golf isn't lagging behind in recognizing the need for educating people who make a living at it.

As for the school itself, it is hard to say which subject was best presented. There were any number of capable instructors and lecturers. Of these, I'd say that Art St. Pierre, who spoke on human relations between members and club employees, was most outstanding. Here was a fellow who evidently had given a lot of thought to the topic and I think that practically everything he said will help me.

Don Fairman, Randolph Field (Tex.) Base GC — Before attending the sessions at Dunedin, I thought I had a lot of good reasons for getting irritated at little things members did, or at some of their habits or mannerisms that annoyed me. The clinic on employee-member relations pretty well dispelled these notions. I learned there are

a lot of things you have to overlook, that you can't be too sensitive about real or imagined wrongs because, after all, they rarely amount to very much.

Joe Devany summed up my new outlook: "Your members can do without you. But can you do without them?"

J. T. Tincher, Goose Creek CC, Leesburg, Va. — My pro, Al Jamison, did everything possible for me to attend the PGA school. I can see now that he realized how much good I'd get out of it. As for the subject that interested me most, I'll pick Club Repairing. Bill Hardy did a masterful job in explaining and demonstrating it. Club repairing is not only fascinating work, but I think it is something that should receive great emphasis in every shop. We're in a sales and service business and our sales volume, I think, is largely dependent on how much service we give.

Jack Ross, Warwick CC, Warwick Neck, R. I. — Maybe I'm not the fussy type because I'll say every one of the training sessions was good. Before I went to Dunedin I thought of my profession as one in

which a fellow is mainly concerned with instruction and sales, but I had my eyes open. Especially when Art St. Pierre talked about good public relations. One thing (among several that he said) stuck: "Doing the right thing because you want to do it is the real beginning of any public relations program." If I don't lose sight of that I think I'll be successful in this business.

Ben F. Dickson, Jr., Oaks CC, Tulsa, Okla. — George Aulbach of Houston, Tex., said that the art of writing sales letters is a neglected one in our business. I agree 100 per cent with him. Our merchandise supposedly is exposed to members when they come in the shop, but how many of them ever see most of it? They've got golf on their minds and usually they're not thinking about buying anything except maybe balls or tees or incidental items.

We've got to reach them when they're receptive. How can we do it better than by letter (and I mean first class!)? George gave plenty of ideas on writing letters that sell. I'm anxious to get a chance to try them out.

Stanley Lencki, Manchester (N. H.) CC — Personally, I think that every phase of the training program was extremely valuable to us fellows who are new in the business and just learning our way around. Probably as important as the actual classroom sessions was the chance we got to talk informally with some of the more experienced pros and also to exchange ideas among ourselves. Going to a PGA school is like going to college: not only do you pick up a lot of specific knowledge but you broaden your grasp of your profession through the contacts you make.

Raymond J. Bolo, Sylvania (O.) G & CC — At Dunedin, I noted a great deal of stress was put on elevating the position of the pro so that he'll enjoy greater prestige than he now has. I'm very much in favor of this, not only because of my job but because I feel that outsiders don't fully appreciate what a pro has to know and be able to do. Probably we need more publicity to accomplish part of this aim but the main burden rests with us. As was brought out at the Assistants' school, we have well established standards of knowledge, competence, conduct and ethics that each of us must live up to if we are to elevate our profession as well as ourselves.

Fred Stegbauer, Sunnyside CC, Waterloo, Ia. — There was quite a bit of emphasis put on club repair at the Dunedin gathering which, in my estimation, was a fine thing. Nobody can deny that clubs are expertly

manufactured today, yet from time to time many of them need repairs. If we are going to give members real service, we should know how to make these repairs on the spot and not have to send clubs back to the factory. Many of the things pointed out by Bill Hardy were revelations. I am going back to my club feeling that I am better able to help in giving quick and quality service in this "lost art."

Tom Frainey, Jr., Park Ridge (Ill.) CC — If nothing else, I gained a lot of confidence by attending the PGA school. I had tried my hand at practically everything included in the Dunedin curriculum, but now I feel I can handle the various jobs covered in it better for having attended the course.

Besides the subjects on pro shop operations, I was impressed by the way Art St. Pierre handled the "human relations" topic. He had his material well organized and I profited greatly by sitting in on the session at which he spoke. Subjects such as this are invaluable in teaching us that we have obligations to a lot of people around a golf course, that our success as assistants, and later as head pros, depends to a large extent on how well we fulfill these obligations.

Bob Dobbie, Woodcrest CC, Haddonfield, N. J. — Art St. Pierre, in his talk, borrowed seven points from a book by Arthur Beckley, "Let's Be Human," that I think was written with assistants and pros in mind. I'm passing them on because I think it was worth the trip to Dunedin just to learn them: (1) Perfect your self control; (2) Appreciate and praise; (3) Stress rewards, avoid punishment; (4) Criticize tactfully; (5) Always listen; (6) Explain thoroughly; (7) Consider the interests of others.

Wayne McCollum, Big Spring GC, Louisville, Ky. — Classroom courses at Dunedin were well worth the trip down there, but I think the biggest advantage to attending a school of this kind comes in getting to meet and talk with older pros. I picked up at least a hundred teaching tips just from listening to them. Further, you get so immersed in golf during the few days at the PGA school that it gives you the enthusiasm to go on concentrating on it for the rest of the year.

Rudy Goettlicher, Westwood CC, Rocky River, O. — I'll go along with Bob Dobbie (see above) on those seven points. I refer to them on the average of twice a week. If I can apply them as I'd like to or hope to, I feel that I'll never have any trouble getting along with mmembers or any one else around my club.