

Danger in Guessing Amount of Revenue Pro Jobs Bring

By **HERB GRAFFIS**

HOW much is a pro job worth?

Club officials rarely come close in guessing, even if pro department accounts are billed through the club. But the officials can't be blamed for their wild guesses as pros themselves don't seem to be able to estimate very closely what another pro is making on a job.

The result of this inability to approximately figure in advance the probable net income of a pro job accounts for many jobs being "oversold" to young and inexperienced pros and to gullible older ones. It also accounts for some clubs taking over the operation of the pro department with the misleading hope that the pro department, well managed, will make up part of the loss of other departments of the clubs.

One time I asked the pres. of a large and wealthy club what the club made out of operating its pro department, which it had done for years.

Money Lost Here

"Make?" he laughed. "We lose money. We lose so much that only a club like ours could afford the extravagance."

I looked over the bags in the racks of this rich club. Even a casual view indicated an average of clubs so old that the members weren't getting the advantage of modern equipment which they certainly could afford and which really should have been sold to them. But, as long as humans are human, the chances are slim of a pro saying, "Honestly, Mr. Smith, you ought to have some decent new clubs that fit you," when there is nothing in the sale for the pro, and in the pro-club arrangement a tacit suggestion that the pro refrain from trying to sell equipment.

Pros Helped Make Golf

That's a peculiar situation that has developed, fortunately in comparatively few cases. Good thing it didn't prevail at the beginning of golf when the pro, by mainly paying his own way, making and selling clubs, balls and bags and giving lessons, made it possible for clubs to have pro-

fessionals and hence for golf to grow.

After intimate talks and examinations of business records with hundreds of professionals, and figuring and talking with many salesmen and credit men representing golf companies, I have been unable to discover a sound basis for estimating pro department net. At jobs that are reputed to be pretty good, the pros' net earning from sales, lessons, salary, club storage and cleaning, bag cart and golf car rental, ranges from \$8 a year to \$91 per member.

One pro at a club generally believed to be one of the best in a metropolitan district showed a year's receipts of \$45,655 (including \$5600 for club storage and cleaning) and expenses of \$42,052, which included wages of \$6,482. He paid himself no salary, yet figured that his net was \$3,603. His inventory, at cost, was about \$20,000 at the start of the season.

The bar revenue at that club for the year was \$74,205.

Carry Substantial Inventory

In one section the professionals, in a recent year, found that they averaged \$11,300 (their cost) in inventory at the start of the season. This figure included a number of 9-hole courses.

It frequently is the case that apparel and shoes account for 25 to 30 per cent of pro department income. It also is not uncommon for lesson income to be 10 per cent of the pro department gross. Yet here are percentages on a volume of \$71,860, done in a recent year by a pro who is an excellent businessman and who has done much to build up his club: Clubs and bags, 57.9; balls, 14.8; shoes, 6; practice range, 6; clothing, 4.5; club cleaning, 2.5; bag cart rental, 4.6; lessons, 3; club rentals, .07.

Buying, stock control and accounting now are operations that demand no little amount of a pro's time and money. At Dunedin a veteran professional at a fine club told me that before World War II he was doing business with fewer than 20 firms. In December, 1957, he made out checks to almost 100 suppliers of pro merchandise.

Payroll Surprises President

A golf club president, a short time ago, told me that he had looked into his pro's business when the pro wanted the club to pay the expense of another young man on the pro's staff. He learned that the pro already had a bigger monthly payroll than most retail stores doing a comparable volume of business.

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story. If you keep everlastingly at it, the power of repetition will soon make members believers.

ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS: When we see, hear or experience two or more ideas together, they become associated together in the mind. When we think of one, we think of the other.

For example, if you recall the name of one of your members, you will immediately remember some of his characteristics, his size and facial expressions. You will also remember his clubs and his style of play. This association of ideas is nature working on your mind. The things associated in your mind about this member are like knots on a string, pull one and the other will follow.

The mind cannot accept one impression and reject another. It accepts all impressions, both good and bad alike. To make good impressions we must associate with good people, good merchandise and good service. If it is known that the best players in your club improved their game with clubs selected by the pro, this association of good golf and pro-fitted clubs is a natural sales builder.

Pro Shop Revenue

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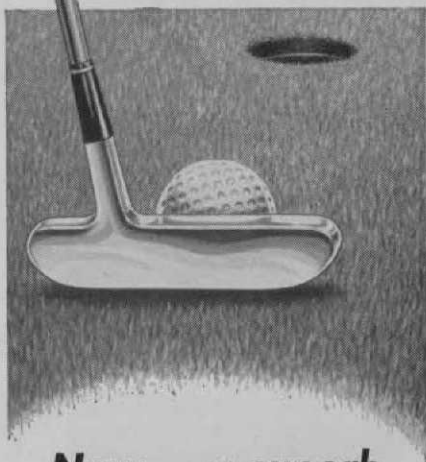
Notwithstanding the operating expenses, limited market and long-lasting nature of a lot of the pros' merchandise, pro golf probably can show a higher percentage of successful enterprises than any other field of small retailing outlets.

Considering the wide and mystifying variation of pro income at clubs that seemingly are about of the same spending class, the pro has to be a mighty careful and smart man to bring his own job up to the point where he will get a good return on his investment in inventory and good pay per hour. He's got to be lucky, too, and have the support of officials and members in providing the volume of business that will attract and hold a competent man.

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