

Don't Put Members in Middle on Golf Car Policy

Pros Told Profit Motive Must Be Secondary to Players' Welfare at PGA Session; Woodard Solicits Caddie Support

"WISH we'd had something like this sooner," was generally the opinion of pros at the golf car seminar which was one of the features of the PGA educational sessions at the association's annual meeting held in November.

Irv. Schloss was chairman of the session. Milt Woodard, executive sec., Western Golf Assn., introduced the talk on "The Caddie Master and the Caddie Program in Relation to Electric Golf Cars" by urging pros not to permit use of golf cars unless caddies, if available, are sent out with the cars. He specifically referred to schoolboy caddies and not older "professional caddies." Woodard solicited continued PGA support of the Western GA Chick Evans Caddie Scholarship Fund, and extended use of the Western material on caddie department training programs and operation.

The Western 20 minute, color sound film, "Your Caddie, Sir," showing Horton Smith, Walter Burkemo, Chick Evans and two caddies and narrated by Bing Crosby, was shown.

The meat of the session was in a practical and frank talk by William J. Freund, mgr., Electri-Car div., Victor Adding Machine Co., an authority whose help in solving golf car policy and operating problems has been of great value to pros, clubs and golfers in general.

Freund spoke for about five minutes on the high spots of car use, saying that he and his associate, Ed Naud, of Victor's Atlanta office, preferred to answer questions from the experience of pros and Victor men themselves.

Agree on Major Points

There were numerous questions and experiences related. Major points on which pros, with successful experience with golf cars, and Freund and Naud agreed:

1. The country club exists not for profit but for the pleasure and relaxation of its members. The members must be served.

2. The pro dept. exists for a profit. Thus, there must be a profit enterprise as an island in the middle of a non-profit organization. Sometimes profit enterprises

are not compatible with non-profit thinking and vice versa. The pro is entitled to a fair profit for himself, even though the club seeks only to break even.

3. Golf cars are, first, a vehicle to accommodate the membership, and second, a vehicle to produce revenue. When they produce a big revenue debates will arise over who should enjoy the benefits of such revenue. Should the revenue be used to offset club deficits? Should the revenue be used to increase professional's gross profits and his losses in other operations of service to the members?

4. Golf cars are here to stay. Someone or some group at the club will take leadership in the acquisition and management of the golf cars. Someone or some group will use initiative in the matter, and the professional has a golden opportunity to use initiative and apply intelligent leadership, or he has the opportunity to lose leadership. In other words, use the opportunity that golf cars present or lose that opportunity.

Intelligent Selfishness

5. A safe guide is to put the welfare and pleasure of the member ahead of all else, and among an intelligent membership the rewards to the professional will follow logically. Be selfish, but for heaven's sake be intelligently selfish. The best service a pro can render to himself and the PGA in relationship to golf cars is to render a good service, at a fair value, to his members using golf cars.

6. As the use of golf cars grows, and as revenue from them increases, be prepared to make compromises, if necessary, to maintain your position in relationship to the cars. Make these compromises on a basis of sound business principles, not emotional considerations.

A representative of one group of professionals related that at one time in his area pros had 100 per cent of golf car concessions, then lost it 100 per cent and now are regaining participation in the revenue as experience and understanding of pros, car users and club officials increase.

An interesting discussion concerned whether or not golf cars damage courses. The "yes" and "no" sides were about equal and equally emphatic.

Freund ended the debate by suggesting that pros, supts, green chmn., etc. concede that the walking golfer, the bag cart and the golfers' car all do some damage to turf. The divot-digger also damages the turf. The practical question is how much or how little damage golf cars cause and how much revenue from the cars, if any, should be used to offset this damage or even to improve the course.

Banker Tells Pros to Seek Needed Financial Help

Digest of talk by W. V. Register, pres., First National Bank, Dunedin, Fla. at PGA annual meeting.

PROPER buying, selection of inventory, record-keeping and business and personal money management often may recommend that the pro consult a specialist in money. The banker is a specialist in money just as the pro is a specialist in golf.

Maybe the pro doesn't want to confide too much in a banker who also is a member of his club. But other members, having a lot more at stake than a pro, talk frankly to their banker, take advantage of his experience and make use of the lending capacity that keeps banks in business.

The pro who buys on credit actually is borrowing from the manufacturer. The club and ball manufacturers have to borrow to build up their own inventories ahead of the consumer buying season.

Gives Club Bad Name

The pro who doesn't pay his bills gives the club a bad reputation. That's why experienced club officials look to manufacturers or credit rating organization for information on the pro's financial reliability. The member figures that he gets posted if he doesn't pay his bills and the pro also should be identified if he is slow pay.

The pro's borrowing position is somewhat limited because his collateral is his stock. The bank or the manufacturer doesn't want merchandise after it has been in pro shop stock for months.

The large amount of money pros lose each year by not taking advantage of allowable discounts doesn't do the pros'

reputations as businessmen any good.

Register expressed the belief that the biggest mistake concerning credit standing that pros make is in not answering correspondence from manufacturers' credit departments.

Want to Help

If a pro is in financial trouble due to illness or other unexpected family expenses, or because the job is not as good as he thought it was — or could be made — the manufacturer wants to help him "get well." That's how the manufacturer will get money owed by the pro for his merchandise. But some pros get sore and get writer's cramp when asked to pay overdue accounts.

The supplier expects that bills due him will be met on the due date so the supplier's own bills can be paid. If maturing obligations can't be met by the pro then it is up to him to explain why and get the situation straightened out. Other businessmen have to do this and the pro is no exception.

Should Have Bookkeeping System

The young pro should have a CPA work out a simple but entirely adequate bookkeeping system for him. Then it will be almost routine for the young man to keep in sound business condition.

Register advocates putting slow-moving stock on "sale" and getting some money out of it before the big selling season is over rather than have the merchandise represent frozen credit.

The banker says that the pro might ask himself the questions that a banker would have to have answered if the pro (or anybody else) were seeking a business loan. The questions are:

- (1) Is the applicant honest?
- (2) What does he want to do with the money he wants to borrow?
- (3) Is the applicant using good judgment in having the proper ratio of fast-selling and slow-selling items?
- (4) Is the applicant reasonably competent?
- (5) How will the lender get the money back and what is the lender's recourse in the event the borrower fails to pay?

There was considerable and favorable discussion of Register's talk by pros and manufacturers. A point often mentioned in business discussions is that a great deal of the pro's financial trouble is the result of having a job "oversold" to him or because the pro fails to make a reasonably accurate investigation and forecast of what the job will yield if it is handled correctly.