

Who's In Charge?

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There continues to be dissension and competition between golf professionals, club mgrs. and course supts. due to failure to define, balance and coordinate the duties of each of these operating officials.

Personalities and economics account for some of these clashes, but usually the lack of cooperation is due to factors that can be corrected and adjusted without much difficulty or strain.

Suffer Individually

The supt., pro and club mgr. must sincerely and smoothly work together to efficiently use the club dollar, raise the prestige of their professions and improve their earning power and job security.

The nature of private club operations often leaves plenty of room for improvement of the income and employment stability of dept. heads, but some of that fault may be due to the status and attitudes of the men themselves instead of being inherent in the club picture.

Having been connected with golf for some 35 years, and having served in all three of these capacities, as well as every other capacity connected with courses and clubhouses, I have made several observations which might possibly help to dispel some of the misunderstanding which exists. Misunderstanding is nearly always the cause of dissension.

Little Uniformity in Operations

Country club organization and operation work in many ways. There is little uniformity among various clubs. This is not surprising nor is it necessarily wrong because the variation exists because of club

size, financial condition and requirements of different communities.

Many clubs operate haphazardly. This is not surprising, although, of course, it is wrong, because the average club is run by a board of directors composed of business men who are engaged full time in making a living and cannot afford to take the time required to run their clubs efficiently. This, of course, puts a premium on the management qualities of the three department heads common to most larger clubs. If these people are carefully chosen for management ability, and paid accordingly, they are usually able to run their depts. efficiently with a minimum of instruction and interference from the club officers. Naturally, the club committees must approve budgets and direct overall policies.

One Man in Charge

In many cases one of these department heads is designated general mgr. of the club. Where this has been done operation seems to be more successful than under any other form of organization. It should be noted that, where more than one dept. is put under one man unless that man is designated general manager, there is often resentment among the depts. This is probably true most often where the pro is put in charge of the course maintenance; there is considerable resentment throughout the country over this situation. This, of course is not as it should be.

In many cases, especially at smaller clubs, the budget does not provide sufficient funds for hiring a top man for each dept. Here the responsibility must be combined and a pro-mgr., pro-supt., or mgr.-supt. combination is the logical answer.



Metropolitan area pros were guests of Claude Harmon of Winged Foot at a golf show held at the Downtown AC in New York in April. Among them (in photo) were Stephen Berrien, Paul Pedersen, Dave Eisenberg, Harry Cooper, J. Bud Geoghegan, Otto Greiner, Jack Mitchell, Frank Strazza, Harry Obitz and Jimmy Thomson. The last seven are pros.

Downtown AC photo, New York

Indeed some clubs are small enough so one man must take care of all depts. In cases where depts. are combined, clubs cannot expect top calibre of operation which usually occurs when an experienced expert is in charge of each function.

In a few cases a dept. head suggests to club officials that he can take on the work of another dept. This may be an admission that he can't find enough work to do in his own dept. This is never actually the case. Operating a pro shop, a club house or a golf course maintenance crew at top efficiency is a full time job at anybody's club.

Qualified Men As Dept. Heads

If the manager of any of these functions is designated general mgr., he should still have a qualified man in complete charge of the other two operations if he is to achieve best results. It is important that if one man is to be in charge of two or more operations, he is officially appointed and called general mgr. This minimizes the dissension which comes about when one man thinks the other is trying to take over his job.

Although at many small clubs excellent courses, good pro shop operation and good clubhouse management are achieved where one man operates two or more departments, you can't get the service or the quality which is possible with a specialist in charge of each operation. You can't buy a Cadillac for the price of a Ford, as the old saying goes.

Frequent Huddles

When the organization is set up properly, the pro, supt. and mgr. should get together frequently to discuss the overall operation of the club each with full knowledge of his responsibilities as well as those of the other two executives, and with no dissension or jealousy, but with a spirit of full cooperation. This is the only way that first class management can be obtained. When this is the case, the club directors and committees can spend a minimum of time running the club and still get maximum enjoyment from all facilities. The members will get more value per dollar spent regardless of the size of their budget or their membership.

A major function of the three national organizations of club operating personnel — the CMAA, GCSA and PGA — must be that of eliminating mistrust and misunderstanding between club dept. heads.

There has been much lip service to the logical idea of departmental cooperation for mutual advancement of supts., professionals and house mgrs. but far from enough actual work by the dept. heads involved. There is the probability that lack of this practical, genuine "togetherness" is limiting the income of the highest paid dept. head of a club or its general mgr. instead of keeping down the earnings of the other operating officials.