

What's A Pro Job Worth?



John Budd

**Club Officials Can Only Guess at Potential Shop Income . . .
It's Time More Figures Were Developed to Show What It Really Is**

By John Budd

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"The pro job is open at our club. Who would be a good man for us?"

This is one of the most difficult and important questions that can be asked about a club operation. This right answer means a lot to the club as well as to the professional selected. Probably it means more to the club than to the pro. The character of the pro usually reflects the character of the club although there are enough exceptions to make the annual job turnover quite high.

Sometimes the fault is that of the professional. Just as often it is the fault of the club for not having selected the right

man for the post. Or it may be because the club hasn't informed the man of all the conditions of the job. Or possibly members aren't sufficiently educated in private club obligations to warrant the services of a superior sort of a pro.

Why Jobs are Underbid

The PGA long has been concerned with pro employment, of course. When the association is advised of the need for a professional it must pass along to all members, impartially, this information. This means that many who are not qualified for the job may apply. The eagerness of some to get the job may result in its going for a lot less than the club expected a first class professional's services would command.

So, what should a pro be worth . . . or a pro job be worth?

Obviously, a club which has successful businessmen as its members expects to hire a professional qualified to earn an income comparable to theirs. The comparison doesn't mean an unreasonably high income for the pro for the simple, logical reason that pro golf isn't among the higher income occupations. A limited market, a rather short season and the durability of most of the merchandise the pro sells cut down his revenue below the net earnings of most members.

Not Informed as to Income

A man who has been consulted as to a high percentage of job changes says that seldom has he heard of even a close estimate of a pro's earning possibilities at a private club being made by any of the members, including those on the committee that hired the pro. By the same token, committee or club members rarely have a good idea of the pro department expenses.

This man also says that in spite of the variation in character, size and activities of a club it is not too difficult to get a fairly good idea of what the pro should net. This can be determined by figuring the number of active men and women members and the amount of play, and from a general idea of the type of club. He adds that at first class private clubs, pros seem to average about five times higher earnings from male golfers than from women.

Based on Bar Revenue

Another indicator of pro earning potential at most of the better clubs is bar revenue, according to this man. Although pro dept. income from all sources invariably is considerably lower than bar income, there is a fairly definite ratio between the two at many first class metropolitan private clubs.

Another interesting point that has been observed is that clubs wanting the most pro dept. service, which calls for somewhat larger and more expensive staffs of assistants than normal, often aren't willing, for example, to share the expense by absorbing meal costs of the staff which generally works a great deal longer than union hours. A club that has a pinch-penny policy toward its pro department often is a poorly managed club.

Too Hasty in Firing

There are times when discouragement and misunderstanding rather than business incapacity produce pro job changes.

Introduces Bill to Reduce Dues Tax

A bill to reduce the tax on club dues and initiation fees from 20 to 10 per cent has been introduced in Congress by A. S. Herlong, Jr., Florida representative. It is known as HR-4606. It probably will be two or three months before the Ways and Means committee reports it to the floor of the House.

During the war the tax on club dues was increased from 10 to 20 per cent along with numerous others such as on jewelry, furs, night clubs, etc. Taxes on the latter were cut back to 10 per cent in recent years but nothing has been done about the club levy. As a result, clubs in the U.S. are paying at least \$35,000,000 a year more in taxes than if the assessment had been cut back. Individually, numerous country clubs are paying from \$50,000 to \$150,000 a year more than they would under the lower rate.

Many congressmen are said to be impressed by the efforts being made by clubs to have the tax inequity corrected. Members are urged to write to their representatives asking them to vote for HR-4606 when it is reported to the floor.

Club officials decide to look around and replace their man instead of telling him what they think is wrong with his performance. They'd be smarter to retain him because of the value of his experience at the club. In some cases the officials might well make use of the friendly services of a highly regarded neighboring professional to straighten out the pro whose job is in peril.

A number of misunderstandings are the result of failures to have the pro and club obligations set forth in a contract.

One of the club obligations, too often disregarded, is that of not advising a professional far enough in advance to look for another job if the man is not going to have his contract renewed. This is a matter that should be clearly covered in the contract.

There isn't enough specific figuring when pro jobs are being considered. Even loose guesses may be helpful in bringing realities into range by putting the fig-

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Dick Wilson, Architect

O. J. Noer, Agronomist

Joe Lee, Associate

Shelley Mayfield, Public Relations

Bob Simmons, Construction

DICK WILSON, INC.

Golf Architects

1100 S. Federal Highway

Boynton Beach, Florida

Also introduced by the visiting feminine panelists were suggestions about the placing of stakes. Out of bounds stakes, they said, should be placed so that they can be seen from the tee. They also recommended that more attention be paid to placing red markers to define lateral hazards.

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ures on paper.

A case in my own section involved lining up a professional for a club whose officials estimated the man could earn at least \$15,000 a year. But when figures were put on paper they showed:

Pro salary	\$ 2400
Club storage and cleaning (300 sets at \$15)	4500
Bag cart rentals	720
Lessons	600
Miscellaneous income	450
Shop sales (\$21,000)	
Generous estimate of gross profit	6300

Estimated annual income \$14,970
Expenses were estimated this way:

Wages to assistants	\$4,200
Insurance, taxes	750
Auto, postage, telephone	680
Supplies, tools, etc.	410
Caddies, entertainment, adver- tising, tournament expense	320
Shop equipment, furnishings, etc.	500

Estimated operating cost \$6,860

This gives an \$8,110 estimated net, about half of what the committee thought the job was worth. There was no salary figured in for the pro's wife who often helped in the shop. No thought was given to the money (cash or borrowed) the pro would have tied up in stock. Gross profit of 30 percent, used in estimating shop income, was plenty high as noted above; 25 percent would have been nearer the actual figure.

Undoubtedly the estimated income from the job was higher than a pro actually would realize even by putting on a good, strong Christmas gift sales campaign.

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