



the Pro and the Club

Many factors enter into it . . . If they were weighed more carefully there would be more satisfaction all around

By **HERB GRAFFIS**

Getting the right professional and the right club together is one of the important business problems in golf.

When the personality of the professional and the character of the club blend, there usually is a successful business operation whether the club is private, semi-private or public. If the pro and the club don't match, golfers aren't satisfied and as a business the club can't possibly be well run, regardless of whether the pro or the club is at fault.

The type of golfers is the biggest variable. Some clubs have members who, from necessity or disposition, buy little and that at cut price. One young professional got a job at a club where directors assured him he would net from \$15,000 to \$18,000 a year. The young man later learned that two of the directors spent less than \$20

a year in the pro shop. His net for the season was \$4,112.

Pro Makes the Job

It isn't always the fault of the members when a pro job is no good. A pro who expects business to come his way without much effort on his part will ruin a job quickly. A pro job is just as hard work and as exacting as the job of any successful club member.

The hiring of a pro generally is handled by men who have had no previous experience of this sort. When the word gets around that a pro job at a first rate club is open there will be many persons applying for it. One pro job filled this year drew 124 applicants. The PGA has a puzzling problem in pro jobs. When it is advised of a vacancy the news is passed along via a bulletin to out-of-work pros. No discrimination can be exercised.

The employer rarely knows what qualifications pro applicants should meet. The job study by club officials should start with a specific listing of duties the club expects to be performed and the responsibilities the professional must assume.

Then, there should be a clear and accurate understanding of the present status of the job and a reasonable estimate of its potential. The club and the professional both ought to have a guide through which achievements and rewards can be checked.

After determining what kind of a job the opening actually offers, it is possible for club officials to get a clear idea of what kind of a professional is needed and will be attracted.

Five Categories of Pro Jobs

Pat J. Markovich, gen. mgr., Richmond (Calif.) G&CC is a successful golf businessman who came up from a pro job. He long has been active in Northern California PGA and golf club operations. Markovich says that clubs are in five categories in their pro requirements. He lists them as follows:

- One class is that of the exclusive private club which must have a mature, well schooled and experienced man whose financial stability and temperament reflect the character of the club.

- In another group are private clubs that need careful but energetic development. The pro for this sort of a post must have the ability to promote tournaments and get publicity for the club. He must be a competent teacher and a player who will be in contention at least in local tournaments. This professional must be a better than average businessman. That, of course, means that his credit is good. He should have the kind of personality and use methods that will satisfy club officials that he will bring prestige to the club while making money for himself.

Versatility Necessary

- In a third group are semi-private clubs with members who have graduated from playing public courses. These people may have a problem in meeting club expenses. The professional for this type of club must be a good enough businessman to be able to make a close guess of the member's ability to support the pro shop. This professional must know how to buy and to what extent he can carry credit. He should have practical knowl-

edge of course maintenance and clubhouse operations. Teaching is a large source of his income and his instruction must develop golf enthusiasm. If he is a good player he will carry more weight with his members. "I have noticed," says Markovich, "that some hard-working professionals in these jobs neglect their own games. That is a mistake. Members think very well of their professional if he plays creditably in tournaments."

- Clubs that are associated with real estate developments usually are of the new and struggling private club kind or are the semi-private class. In either case they need a professional with initiative, ingenuity, a congenial personality and sound knowledge of every phase of pro business. A fellow who is a good golf businessman and promoter may seem expensive on these golf club-real estate jobs, but actually he often proves to be the best bargain on the payroll. At the privately-owned clubs, owners usually want to lease the pro department or get a percentage of the gross. The pro for this type of job should have public course operating experience and be a first class businessman. Volume is the big thing in this business and unless the pro can get it and make money for himself the course owner is out of luck.

- At the public course the pro has to be a vigorous promoter. To get shop volume he has to merchandise alertly and aggressively. He has to know what his volume should be and he has to be able to keep his cost of operation down. Without some special training in this type of business, a pro can get many headaches but not realize much profit. When the job is handled by the right man he not only can do quite well for himself but render a public service of far-reaching value to the community.

What Does the Job Amount To?

Markovich's views and those of Robert E. Hanna, Executive Sec., Northern California Golf Assn. agree closely. Hanna, in looking at pro employment from the club viewpoint, says that there should be figures showing definitely what the job has to offer and neither the club nor the prospective pro should figure on any other than a minimum basis. Then, the potential should be considered as a goal to be reached by a capable man at a club that is willing to see a man well paid for a job well done.

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Bob Karbatsch (r), pres. of the Rocky Mountain GCSA, recently presented a plaque to Oliver P. Hutchinson in tribute to the great work the latter has done for the supts' organization over the years. Hutch is 75 years old and has been a course supt. for nearly 50 years. He recently retired as green-master at the Willis Case GC in Denver and is working at Columbine CC.

The authors rate cereal grain straw first for effectiveness then, in order, jute bagging, paper mesh and grass mats. Plastic sheets required special handling, particularly prompt removal before seedlings were damaged by high temperatures. "The sprayed-on latex material appeared promising in initial tests in the spring of 1960. Prior to seed germination it formed a temporary protective film which gradually disintegrated, permitting stands to develop."

Matching the Pro and Club

(Continued from page 38)

After the job is defined, the qualifications of the pro to fit the job must be appraised. The candidate's education, references, experience and personality should be checked. His financial background should be investigated.

Hanna observes that there is need for more education of the young professionals in teaching methods, psychology, accounting, merchandising and advertising and business English.

Points To Be Checked

Bill Sherman, western field representative of the National Golf Foundation, summarizes the pro hiring problem:

(1) What type of professional is needed at the course?

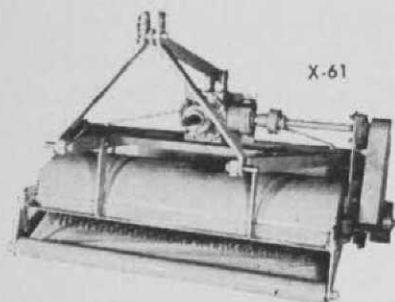
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(2) What does the job pay?

Income — salary and concession privileges.

Job growth possibilities.

(3) What specific duties are expected of the professional? These should be itemized in order of importance.

(4) Have job duties been detailed in a written agreement? Has the compensation, both in salary and income, been included into this agreement so that both the professional and contracting party are aware of obligations and responsibilities?

(5) If a new golf course, or one planning a pro shop or clubhouse remodeling, has the professional been consulted for his ideas concerning the pro shop?

(6) Has the professional outlined his policies and methods of operation to the satisfaction of contracting party?

(7) Has the hiring group or individual obtained a list of current character and credit references?

Why Is One Pro Worth More?

Bob Gutwein, professional at Lake Merced G&CC, Daly City, Calif., takes

the view that the pro who is applying for a job should accent what he will do for the club to be worth the income that he is seeking. It is Gutwein's opinion that pros too often want to know what will be done for them instead of what they will do for the club.

Should Be Clarified

Gutwein observes that most club officials do not realize how much work, investment, time and worry a pro has to put into his job in order to get the return his qualifications merit. He feels that it would be mutually helpful if the club would put in writing what it expects of the pro in all phases of the job and what the pro can expect from the club.

After six months or so the agreement should be reviewed. If adjustments have to be made in the contract, Gutwein feels that probably they are good and necessary ones and both parties will benefit from them. Such a review should correct the overselling of jobs by club officials and bring them up to a mutually satisfactory standard.

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