

Southern Cal Pros Skip Tourney In Hassle Over Shop Leases

*Say standards will deteriorate if outside operators move in;
Owner cites right to run his own concessions*

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San Diego County has become a battleground over the question:

To lease or not to lease pro shops to qualified professionals.

The matter came to a head before the San Diego County Open tournament held recently at Cottonwood CC, a new public fee course 18 miles east of downtown San Diego.

The tournament is sponsored annually by the County Golf Association, a group headed by amateurs and including nearly all of the county's 30 clubs in its membership.

Disciplinary Action Threatened

A few weeks before the tournament, directors of the Southern California section of the PGA, headed by Dick Boggs of Sepulveda CC, Los Angeles, announced that section pros who competed in the tournament would be subject to disciplinary action by the section.

The reason: Cottonwood CC does not lease its pro shop but hires two professionals on a salary basis.

Also entering the dispute was the San Diego County Golf Professional Association, of which Don Collett, Coronado, is president.

This group has about 60 members, half of them section, or Class A, pros.

Before the Cottonwood tournament, Boggs informed County GPA officials that non-section pros, mostly assistants who are working for Class A membership, could compete in the San Diego Open without future retribution from the section.

Two Others Operate Shops

Twenty pros, including several who work for Class A Section members, competed at Cottonwood. (An amateur, Marine Lance Corporal Don Harman, won the Open. He also holds the San Diego Amateur and City crowns).

Besides Cottonwood, semi-private Singing Hills CC and private Rancho Santa

Fe are San Diego County courses which run their own pro shops rather than lease them to professionals.

The question has sharpened in recent years with construction of more public and semi-public courses.

Many PGA officials believe that qualified pros (preferably Class A with five years of active pro experience, and a National PGA card) should be allowed to lease pro shops.

They contend the presence of a qualified professional brings business and goodwill to the course and the pro should be rewarded, by allowing him a lease, for the many extra duties he fulfills at the club.

Would Weaken Standards

Veteran PGA members also see management control of their pro shops as a trend that will weaken the ethics and standards of the profession. They claim that eventually pro shops would be operated by clothing and equipment salesmen without professional qualifications that the game requires.

On the other side of the question, Bud Sears, president of Cottonwood said:

Has Right To Run Business

"We believe that a person or group who invest up to \$1,000,000 in a golf plant have the right to run their business as they see fit.

"We have qualified professionals at Cottonwood. One of our pros is in the process of applying for a Class A card from the PGA, and the other one hopes to apply soon. We have a successful operation and pay good salaries.

"A pro shop is a revenue-making part of the business, same as course fees, carts, and the restaurant. It isn't economically feasible or morally justified that management, which has provided the funds, worry, work and brains in constructing a golf course, should give up one of its major assets.

"There are certain courses where it may

be desirable to lease out the shops — an example, a city-owned course where the city does not want to be bothered with the business aspects. Also, at a private course where the members pay their fees to enjoy golf and get away from business worries.

"Further, 95 per cent of the personal contact with our customers is in our pro shop. Because public relations play such an important part in any commercial enterprise, we feel it should not be entrusted to a concessionaire."

A PGA of America official told this writer recently that his office has no hard rule about members being pro shop leaseholders, "but we encourage them to let the sectional or national offices look over their contracts" as a protective measure.

The argument is likely to continue.

For years, Los Angeles section pros have not competed in pro-amateur or other tournaments where pros do not hold the pro shop lease.

A big pro-am held at Singing Hills also is reportedly threatened by the section crackdown.

It's Complicated—But Alternates Are Assured for World Series

Sponsors of the World Series of Golf, to be played at Firestone CC in Akron, O., Sept. 7-8, have worked out an alternate system to assure having a full complement of four contenders for the title that Jack Nicklaus won last year in the initial playing of the event.

Nicklaus, as defending champion was to be the first alternate, but since he won this year's Masters, he is seeded into the Series. The second alternate will be the loser of a playoff in any of the major qualifying tournaments which include, in addition to the Masters, the U.S. and British Opens and the PGA Championship.

If only one player is needed to fill out the Series lineup, and if there are more than two losers from the remaining qualifying tournaments, these players will meet at Firestone on Sept. 3 to decide the fourth contender in the Series.

If none of the major qualifying events are decided in playoffs, and additional players are needed to round out the four Series finalists, there will be a playoff on Sept. 3 involving the second-place finishers in the qualifying tournaments.

If it is necessary to hold a Sept. 3 round at Firestone, it will be at 18 holes with a sudden-death playoff deciding the final



This is the fourth hole at Cottonwood CC in San Diego, Calif. Class A PGA pros didn't play in County Open tournament at this course recently because of dispute over shop leasing situation.

issue in case of a tie.

To keep peace among the tournament pros, the World Series sponsors are donating \$20,000 to the Utah Open purse because two of the playing dates in this event conflict with the Series. The telecast of the Series in the Salt Lake City area will be delayed until evening so that local fans can attend the Utah Open in the afternoon and still catch the Series.

Whitemarsh Open in October

With June's five PGA tournaments offering prizes totaling \$400,000 and the announcement of the \$200,000 Carling World Open in 1964, another rich tournament that will be played in October generally has been overlooked. That is the \$125,000 Whitemarsh Open that will be held Oct. 3-6 at Whitemarsh Valley CC, near Philadelphia. This event offers the largest purse in PGA history and is being played for the benefit of the Child Development Center for the Handicapped.

Bantam Golf Tournament

First Thunderbird bantam golf invitational will be played July 16-17 at Thunderbird Hills GC, Huron, O. Co-sponsors are the Huron C of C and North Central Ohio District GA. Don Baker, Box 297, Willard, O., is the tournament director. Boys and girls in 10-12 and 13-15 age groups will compete in separate flights.