

Why don't they stop picking on the PGA?

*Unwarranted sniping
undermines the
organization's work, says this
prominent leader of
the game's 5,400 pros.*



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With golf enjoying the greatest boom in its long and colorful history, I think the time has come for someone to speak forth for the Professional Golfers Association of America against the unmerited diatribes of self-appointed critics who do not know or choose to ignore the facts.

It is, I suppose, a tribute to the magnitude the game has attained that those on the fringes post themselves as sentinels over the scene, albeit watchmen without portfolio.

Yet it is distressing, and at times extremely aggravating, to those of us who have devoted our lives and energies to this great game to become the targets for vilification by irresponsible sources.

Much of what is written and said is downright false or fiction compounded of half truths.

I speak not only as a PGA officer but also as one of the more than 5,400 golf professionals to whom this game has been a way of life and who constantly attempt to put back something out of sheer gratitude.

None of us is adverse to constructive criticism. But it is a bitter and hurting thing when you are damned if you do and damned if you don't. The only inference which can be drawn is that the snipers are motivated by sensationalism for profit, having failed utterly to check both sides of questions which arise from time to time.

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PICKING ON PGA

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Two recent instances which spring to mind concern an article without basis which perpetrated the falsity that there was a "revolt" among the tournament professionals because of dissatisfaction with management of the \$4,000,000 PGA Tour and, following our ruling that after holing out on the final hole a player should not throw his ball into the gallery, an unwarranted jibe that this was the "only positive decision the PGA has made in years."

There are other action assassinations with which I will deal later. But first let's consider these two statements.

First of all, there isn't and there has not been a "revolt" among the tournament players. The so-called "home club professionals" realize, of course, how much the Tour has meant in spreading the golfing gospel. Yet it should be taken into consideration that the Tour was started by the PGA to create an incentive and to build golf generally. For years it lost money, and funds had to be supplied by the rank and file professionals across the country to keep the incubator running.

Now it is affluent and the PGA officers and executive committee absolutely do everything in their power to better both the welfare and income of the tournament professional. A great deal of time at the national PGA headquarters is taken up with Tour activities.

There is no question but what both groups must live under one association. On the one hand it was our "baby" now grown into maturity. On the other hand, while tournament play may make a few millionaires, the day will come when those who do not fare so well financially will return to the home pro ranks.

As to any dissatisfaction with the manner in which tournament golf is handled, if there is a fault it would have to lie in lack of liaison between Tour players on the Tournament Committee and the players who elected them to controlling office on that committee.

I say controlling office because the Tournament Committee is composed of seven members—four of them Tour play-

ers and with one of their number as chairman. The parent PGA organization is represented by a minority group of three officers.

Currently the chairman is Tommy Jacobs and his fellow players on the committee are Dan Sikes, Jr., Mason Rudolph and Gardner Dickinson. PGA president Max Elbin, treasurer Warren Orlick and I round out the committee.

This committee, on which the majority vote prevails, controls tourney play, by-laws, rules, and scheduling.

Thus the players themselves through their representatives had the ruling voice in instituting the rule, as example, where a player can no longer toss his ball to the gallery. The feeling was that someone could be injured in a ball scuffle among a crowded gallery, damage might be done to costly greens and players in the following group could be upset by the confusion.

There was a so-called clamor among some of the leading money winners for only 30 official tournaments per year. The four playing members of the Tournament Committee usually decide which tournaments are official. No player can be forced to compete in any of them and each man can select his own 30 official appearances out of more than 40 tournaments on the schedule.

The sharpshooters are at their insidious work constantly. There was an allegation that the World Series of Golf started without sanction of the Tournament Committee. Our records show to any who care to see them that five members of the committee voted in favor of this event because of a general feeling that the champions of these major events—the Masters, PGA, and U.S. and British Opens—deserved some special consideration for their great achievements. Not one member of the committee voted against it.

There was criticism because the PGA received only \$7,500 from the World Series. We felt that this was sufficient for use of PGA endorsement and that the players should receive the bulk of the money along with a contribution to a bonus plan for the fall Tour.

Why the Tournament Bureau Fund?

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First of all it amounts to somewhat less than the reported \$400,000 it is alleged to contain. This is kept in a separate account for Tournament Bureau purposes, as insurance against future lean years and as a reserve for other possible contingencies. The PGA has no designs on these funds whatsoever. These funds are now restricted, and will continue to be, for the use in underwriting Tournament Bureau activities only.

There was immediate criticism with the employment of Robert Creasey, a former assistant secretary of labor, as executive director. And then, also, of the hiring of Fred Corcoran as public relations advisor. What, it was asked, does Creasey know about golf?

What, I might ask in rebuttal, does he have to know about golf? He has played golf for 30 years, has a three-handicap, and has been a member of some of the finest clubs in the country. He has also served on the board of directors and golf committees of many of these clubs. I have been in the game for 35 years and I've met no amateur player who has a better grasp of the needs of the PGA. I might also add that his knowledge of the construction and by-laws of the PGA, even at this early stage, is far superior to that of the rank and file of our organization.

He is a nationally known attorney. He has been employed to handle the affairs of a very complex organization. The tournament program is only a segment. His duties will encompass many more activities, affairs which above all require a cool, skilled legal mind.

Among the complaints leveled at the PGA from time to time is a charge that quite often the officers are "inaccessible." To help promote accessibility as well as to advise us on how to attain a better public image we have availed ourselves of the services of Corcoran.

One of the carping comments was that we were hiring a man we previously had fired. In this case, all I can say is that in any organization there are periods of trial and error and changing administrations cause the formation of new policies.

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The facts are clear that Corcoran played a major role in building tournament golf into the success it has become. He has a broad background in the game and it is our feeling that while he is not employed as an overall public relations man we feel that his ideas and advice will be of vast help in working for the PGA organization. He will not move into the tournament picture but his role is to provide better communication between the PGA as a whole, the home club professional, the touring professional, and the public at large.

Personally I am tired of hearing the parent PGA organization branded as a group of do-nothings and free loaders. Forgive self presentation, but I have been a sectional and national officer of the PGA for over 12 years. I am one of those waspishly referred to as "golf teachers" and yet I feel that we "golf teachers" too are doing a solid, earnest job for the game of golf. No one should forget that the home club professional is the backbone of golf in America. He stimulates and encourages people to play the game at the grass roots level. He conducts clinics and junior classes, and organizes industrial leagues. He has had an important role in the great growth of the game.

I must hold, also, that the parent PGA has been intelligently progressive. One of our latest steps was to start a players' school to qualify Tour hopefuls so that tournament golf will not be cluttered with hopelessly inept players. We have five business schools and are about to embark on home study courses which will teach management, agronomy, rules teaching methods, merchandising, how to operate a successful pro shop and other allied factors designed to elevate the entire profession.

Our sole desire is to help this great game reach ever greater peaks and to weld the professionals—tournament player and home pro alike—into a solid organization in which all pull together shoulder to shoulder. One of the best weapons, as I see it, is open and honest discussion which will wipe out the undercover sniping. •