

The Professional's Status

First section of nationwide survey shows concern for contracts, pension plans and erosion of profits.

Moved by mounting reports that the golf professional's domain is shrinking and that he is not receiving his fair share of the continuing golf boom, GOLFDOM recently undertook an ambitious plan to measure the true picture of the pro's current status and provide an opportunity for him to air his complaints. An elaborate questionnaire was mailed to a cross-section of golf professionals throughout the U. S. seeking pertinent information. Out of a sample group of 2,000, approximately 500 responded—an amazing 25%—and the responding professionals were not hesitant to cast new and brighter light on their problems.

All told, they took time to answer more than 60 questions about their status and the state of their business.

The first part of this analysis appears

here. Others, dealing with more specific areas of sales and profits will appear in future issues.

This first section covers an analysis of the answers as they concern the pro himself—his duties and responsibilities; ownership of pro shop or profit arrangements; how he spends his vacation; how much golf he is able to play himself, and his attitude toward contracts, pension plans and the PGA.

The majority of the questions could be answered "yes" or "no," and are included in that manner on the following pages.

Three specific questions on pension plans, contracts, and current activities of the PGA required written answers. The most cogent of these replies have been collected and are given in separate sections under the appropriate heading.

PROFILE OF CLUBS IN SURVEY SAMPLE

TYPE OF CLUB					
Private 56.6%	Semi-Private 13.1%	Public 10.6%	Municipal 11.6%	Resort 8.1%	
TOTAL NO. CLUB MEMBERS		NO. WOMEN MEMBERS		NO. JUNIOR MEMBERS	
1- 99	6.1%	1- 99	56.8%	1- 99	87.1%
100-299	41.4%	100-299	38.6%	100-299	11.3%
300-499	32.7%	300-499	2.8%	300-499	.4%
500 over	19.8%	500 over	1.8%	500 over	1.2%
SIZE OF GOLF COURSE					
9 Holes 26.3%	18 Holes 66.6%	27 Holes 3.7%	36 Holes 2.6%	Over 36 Holes .8%	
FACILITIES OFFERED OTHER THAN GOLF					
Bar 69.2%	Restaurant 84.4%	Locker Room 76.9%	Swimming Pools 54.4%	Tennis Courts 31.7%	

THE PRO AND THE SHOP

Who operates (owns) the pro shop?

Club Pro	92.7%
Club	6.3%
Concessionaire	1.0%

If club operates (owns) pro shop, what percentage of the profits do you receive?

None	37.5%
Under 10%	12.5%
10-19%	18.8%
20-29%	12.5%
30% and over	18.7%

How many months a year is your pro shop open?

Under 3 months	1.9%
4-6 months	7.7%
7-9 months	26.4%
10-11 months	6.4%
12 months	57.6%

What do you do in the off-season?*

Vacation	56.6%
Other pro job	17.6%
Job outside golf	35.1%

PERSONAL DATA

How long have you been at your present club?

Up to 3 years	33.3%
4-6 years	24.1%
7-10 years	8.6%
Over 10 years	34.0%

How many rounds of golf do you play a week?

None	5.9%
1	38.9%
2	32.5%
3	10.4%
4-6	10.0%
7-10	2.3%

Have you attended any of the PGA Business Schools?

Yes	No
31.9%	68.1%

If so, when did you attend the Schools?

This year	11.1%
1 year ago	17.3%
2 years ago	12.3%
3 years ago	11.1%
4 years ago	13.6%
5 years ago	12.3%

*Multiple answers, do not add up to 100.

Continued on next page

The PGA and pensions

Golf professionals were almost unanimous in their desire for a pension plan to be worked out by the PGA. Most felt that it would be necessary to have such a plan drawn up by outside experts, and that steps in this direction should be taken immediately.

All in favor of a PGA pension plan seemed to be willing to pay higher dues, or to make payments into the plan by other means, but many felt that there should be outside help. Far and away the most often "outside help" suggested was that the PGA use the monies it collects from television and tournaments, and that the touring pros should be made to contribute proportionately and heavily to the plan. Quite a few suggested that manufacturers of equipment sold only through pro shops could be assessed for contributions.

Still others felt that this was a job for the individual club, and a few outspoken individualists felt that they should do it all themselves.

Sample comments on what the PGA could do to establish a pension plan for the golf professional follow:

"Install a plan making the clubs pay 75%, the pros 12.5% and the PGA 12.5% of the desired benefits."

"Consider a type of membership for pros who are in the golf business—i.e., golf range pros, limited summertime pros—but do not have the qualifications for PGA 'Class A' membership because their major income can't come from golf."

"The PGA is strictly a touring pro type of organization. Very little is done or considered for the club pro."

"Engage a law firm in Washington, D. C. to effect legislation in Congress. Many club pros work 80-90 hours per week, and with the present high U. S., state and local taxes cannot put enough away for retirement. This is one reason they are forced to work until they are very old. Clubs don't seem to care, or dodge the question as a whole."

"Invest in our own golf courses throughout the entire U. S., especially in areas that would have long seasons. We are the professionals in the sport and

Continued on page 78

PERSONAL DATA (cont'd.)

6 years ago	12.3%
7 or more years ago	9.9%

If you have an assistant, has he attended the PGA Schools?

Yes	No
40.3%	59.7%

If so, when did he attend the Schools?

This year	27.0%
1 year ago	29.1%
2 years ago	27.0%
3 years ago	9.0%
4 years ago	3.4%
5 years ago	3.4%
6 or more years ago	1.1%

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Are you responsible for duties other than your regular duties as a pro?

Yes	No
62.3%	37.7%

Are you responsible for maintenance of the course?

Yes	No
36.9%	63.1%

To whom do you report?*

President	18.9%
Owner	15.3%
Board Chairman	32.9%
Manager	13.3%
Executive Committee	11.2%
Mayor of City	2.4%
Superintendent of Parks	3.2%
Secretary-Treasurer	.8%
Greens Committee	1.2%
Board of Directors	2.0%
Golf Committee	.4%

What club meetings do you attend?*

Golf	22.4%
Tournament	14.7%
Rules	1.7%
Handicap	4.3%
Greens	10.3%
Board of Directors	15.5%
ALL	29.3%
NONE	17.7%
Publicity	1.3%
Social and Hospitality	4.3%

*Multiple answers, do not add up to 100.

Continued on page 26

Comments on contracts

Contracts present a real enigma to many pros, although most who answered this question stated that they feel a contract is desirable. The answers would seem to indicate that younger pros, who are entering the field under new or changing conditions want contracts, while the older "entrepreneurs" prefer to "let things ride" as they have for years.

Job security was the reason most often cited by those favoring contracts. It was also pointed out that a contract outlines the responsibilities of both pro and club—each knows where he stands at all times. The fact that many clubs elect new officers each year and that they do not feel bound by or have no proof of previous verbal understandings was often cited as back-up argument for contracts. Also, the pro's risk in having to dispose of his merchandise if he were summarily dismissed.

Sample pros and cons on contracts:

"Yes. It gives me a certain amount of security. Am able to purchase merchandise in ample quantities rather than just short two-week supplies."

"Yes. When I came here the club was drowning (no carts, no play, and no course, even). I have built a fine course; have built a pro shop; have carts and a nice bar business, including slot machines. *They are being taken away.*"

"No. If not wanted, why stay; if unhappy, why stay?"

"No. A fellow has to think twice—first to be able to move into a new opening, if offered; then at the same time he must work hard to warrant keeping his job."

"Yes. Because of investment in pro shop merchandise and the seasonal aspects of job openings."

"Yes. Verbal agreements made with snow on the ground tend to look different from both sides involved as the grass starts growing."

"Yes. Because it spells out the obligations and responsibilities of each of the parties concerned, and I believe serves to promote a better understanding between the professional and the Board of Directors. *It would be nice if the*

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DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Continued from page 24

What club committees do you serve on?*

Golf	26.0%
Tournament	28.6%
Rules	5.2%
Handicap	6.9%
Greens	16.9%
Publicity	1.3%
Social and Hospitality	4.3%
Pro Shop	.4%
Board of Directors	3.5%
ALL	17.7%
NONE	20.3%

PENSION PLANS

Does your club provide a retirement plan or pension program for its employees?

Yes	No
11.4%	88.6%

If so, how long has it been in effect?

Up to 3 years	27.5%
4-6 years	25.0%
7-10 years	10.0%
Over 10 years	37.5%

If the club does not have a plan, is one being considered?

Yes	No
14.5%	85.5%

Do you feel that the PGA should have a pension plan for all PGA pros?

Yes	No
94.2%	5.6%

Do you feel that the PGA is doing enough to institute such a program?

Yes	No
21.0%	79.0%

(See accompanying comments.)

CONTRACTS

Do you have a contract with the club?

Yes	No
58.9%	41.1%

Do you have only a verbal understanding?

Yes	No
98.0%	2.0%

*Multiple answers, do not add up to 100.

If you have a written contract, what is the length of contract time?

Under 1 year	12.8%
1 year	37.9%
2 years	8.4%
3 years	13.3%
4 years	.5%
5 years	17.2%
6 years	.5%
7 years	.5%
Over 7 years	2.5%
Lifetime	6.4%

Do you feel that a contract is desirable?

Yes	No
70.4%	29.6%

(See accompanying comments.)

Should the PGA do more?

A key question in the survey asked professionals what, if anything, the PGA should be doing to help further the interests of the club professional, which it is not now doing.

Most felt that the framework of the Association should be strengthened—along the lines of labor unions, if necessary—to aid pros in obtaining better contracts and pension plans. The friction between the working club pro and those “glamor boys” of the tour became evident from the answers, and there were many pleas that touring pros’ endorsements be limited to pro shop lines of golfing equipment.

Other battles in which the working pros felt that the PGA might offer more assistance include the barring of pro lines from shops not owned by PGA pros, and those owned by the clubs; help combat price-cutting and discount houses; help pros keep clubs from taking over the pro shops and golf cars, and a public relations campaign by the PGA to “educate” the public on the value of the home club professional.

Typical answers to this question:

“Just about everything. Junk their red coats and insignia and get down to promoting the PGA member with traveling clinics and advertisements.”

“Withdraw Class-A rating from pros who take jobs without full concessions.”

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COMMENTS ON CONTRACTS

Continued from page 24

membership also knew where the responsibilities of the professional ceased."

"No. My situation is a little different. I am a city employee, controlled by politics, but I have been with the city 36 years under three administrations."

"Yes. My club is three years old. I stayed when it was slow, and now that business is excellent I might like a five-year or two-year contract."

"Yes. It's desirable, but, as I see it, they are cutting down on the pro's earnings every year."

"No. They (contracts) are always able to be broken. I want to be free to move if opportunity knocks."

"Yes. Only a poor businessman would risk his professional standing and investment without a contract."

"Yes. Our bosses (in private clubs) change yearly, and there must be an accurate record—impossible verbally—of all concessions, obligations, responsibilities, etc. Directors leave the club by resignation and death, so verbal agreements are not sound."

"Yes. (A contract is desirable) with the option for the coming season and with a raise in salary."

"Yes. A pro should stay at a club for a number of years. It's bad when a pro jumps every year. A contract protects the pro as well as the club."

"Yes. Being owner, I have a five-year contract and draw only a salary of \$12,000 per year with no percentage of shop or rentals, but keep all lesson fees. However, I work seven days a week."

"No. We have had no written contract arrangement all these years (15) and I don't care to alter this policy."

"Yes and No. Actually, in the West a man's word is still his bond, and I mean this—contracts are not worth very much."

"Yes. Being young (31 years old) I am able to gain valuable experience without risk of personal monies, and am free timewise in relation to bookwork, taxes, payroll, etc."

"Yes. Agreements can be changed in the middle of the season when your investment is too high to resign."

"Yes. Protects the professional's position."

Continued on next page

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COMMENTS ON CONTRACTS

Continued from preceding page

tion for a specific period of time; defines definite salaries, and the pro's responsibilities are in writing. It should protect the pro from losing his job with a large inventory on hand without being able to dispose of the inventory."

"No. If club and professional cannot trust each other, why work with or for each other?"

"Yes. Our club has changed ownership and new conditions have meant new obligations and controls."

"Yes. The business is becoming too large to be casual about such things."

"Yes and No. The only fault in this respect is—what can you do if they decide to let you go—the court costs would kill you."

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PGA AND PENSIONS

Continued from page 23

only 'own' one golf course."

"Funds available from manufacturers' rebates at year end should be accepted by the PGA. Members should pay a fee and dues in opposite six months."

"Now that we have a man in our headquarters who has a pension plan background, I am sure something will be done."

"We, the PGA members, are probably the most individualistic operators in the world. We need to unite and get some bargaining power. The PGA needs to do some research along these lines to protect and preserve our position."

"We are all a great bunch of individuals and this is our problem. The only way to survive is to become a union. Plumbers, carpenters and sheet metal workers don't have the problems we face."

"I feel the PGA should have a pension plan only for 'Class A' and 'Junior A' members. Therefore more professionals would work harder for this title. The PGA is only interested in tournaments and TV money, and not doing enough for the club pro."

"The PGA has been organized and in operation much longer than your in-

Continued on page 80

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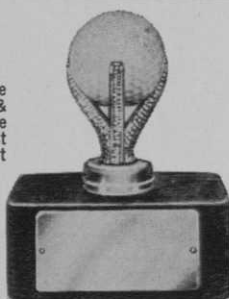
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PGA AND PENSIONS

Continued from page 78

dustrial unions, and look how much progress the unions have made in helping their members. A pro's day is twice as long as an industrial journeyman, and it is time for more improvement in the lot of the PGA member."

"I feel each pro should set up a plan of his own for retirement. In this day and time too many people are wanting a handout."

"All club manufacturers should help with a retirement program. A percentage of sales to pro shops should be put into the fund for all members, say 5% of the year-end net, including store sales."

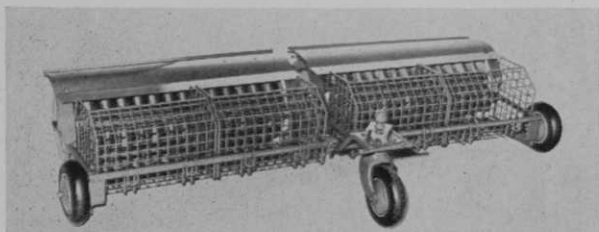
"Take more decisive action. Make some proposals as to the various possibilities and allow the entire membership to vote on these, and institute a plan upon getting a majority vote. Publish a financial statement each year showing how our dues are spent and how monies derived from other sources are used."

"Have some kind of a union or pro-

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PGA AND PENSIONS

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tection for golf pros."

"Get out of the golf course business. Take rented office quarters and play on courses offered by chambers of commerce and civic groups. Place the money from the sale of the course in a pension fund."

"Use royalties from the sale of PGA-endorsed equipment. Pros would then push these lines."

"Bring in a specialist on pension plans such as Bankers Trust Company (N. Y.) and have them set up a plan based on present conditions."

"Take a very small percentage from all TV programs with PGA playing pros."

"Establish a plan by a committee, approve it and set it into effect. Run the PGA like a business and get rid of the golf course in Florida—few pros use it."

"Have a program like football and baseball players have."

"I feel that the individual should set up his own future."

"There should be a national tour event with all big names participating, such as baseball's all-star game, with proceeds going to the retirement fund. In addition, all clubs should participate in the

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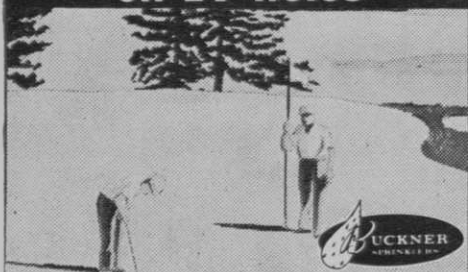
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PGA AND PENSIONS

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PGA program."

"They should make it a requirement for each club in a PGA contract. The club should pay half and the pro the other half."

"I do not feel that the PGA should have a pension plan. However, I do feel that each club should organize a national golf club group and provide a pension plan for the golf professional."

"It does not seem feasible to me for the PGA to operate a pension plan for its members. This is an employer function and the club should provide a pension plan for all its employees."

"I feel that the PGA should set up a plan such as the one baseball has. Money for this plan could be raised from one pro tournament played at a course adjacent to a large population. Study each applicant for a pension and advise and help him institute a program at his job, to be invested and disbursed by the national."

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For more information circle number 127 on card

PGA AND PENSIONS

Continued from page 84

"I don't want a pension, I want protection of my area. There are four courses around me and no pros, yet they buy all-pro lines and resell at 5% over cost."

"Get the tourney pros to endorse pro line equipment only. This would be a good start."

"The teaching pro, on the tee day after day, has made the game of golf popular and the touring pro is cashing in on it. Most of them could not put a grip on a club if they had to, or do any repairs."

"Register as a union and avoid taxes."

"Something should be worked out so all the money isn't on the tour and TV. What about the club pro who sells golf for all the big money winners?"

"Have a program on a voluntary basis to which the club and professional can contribute. Quit talking about it and get some sort of formula that will work. It just can't be that hard!"

CAVANAUGH'S

f o r

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SHOULD PGA DO MORE?

Continued from page 26

"Any PGA pro at a course not having full proceeds from the shop should be barred from the PGA."

"It is hard to say as there is little the pro can do if the club decides to get rid of him. I can give two examples of this happening in King Mike Brady at Winged Foot and Bill Gordon at Tam O'Shanter. The PGA could drop from its membership any pro applying for jobs at clubs where a PGA pro is located."

"I was a member of PGA for 30 years, but quit in 1954. I felt I was getting nothing out of it."

"Some plan to protect the pro from unfair price-cutting and discount houses getting pro-line merchandise, and letting the touring pros have their names associated with balls and clubs they do not use themselves."

"They could do something for the club pro—all you hear is the touring pro. Run tournaments from club pros statewide and have a play-off for the four or

Continued on page 90

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SHOULD PGA DO MORE?

Continued from page 88

five spots in each state. Give the club pro some recognition he deserves."

"I have been a member of the PGA for 49 years and I don't think they ever did much for the club pro except that his wife gets \$1,000 when he dies and he has a Class-A certificate to hang on the wall showing he is a bona fide golf professional. Very few pros I know of ever got a job through the organization."

"More focus on club pro problems and less on the glamor boys of the playing circuit. It is 7,000 other PGA members versus about 300 on the circuit."

"Control professional advertising for storeline merchandise. Some protection is needed against clubs taking the golf shops away. There should be minimum contracts for the PGA golf pro."

More comments on the PGA due in October.

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