

Swinging around golf

by Herb Graffis



PGA needs Some schooling

The PGA begins extension of its business educational operations badly handicapped . . . PGA hasn't got the slightest idea of market dimensions, economic and statistical score relative to the manufacturers and marketing competitors, and what the economic relation is of the pro to the private club and other forms of golf course retailing outlets . . . Marketing experts who love the pros at their clubs and who've heard about the PGA schooling without the basis of research and basic marketing information, say the PGA in the present area of golf business education is about like trying to give a guy a 15 minute treatment on grip, stance and swing then sending him out to make a living in competition on the circuit . . . And this should happen now when the store and big chain outlets are using the smartest American merchandising brains to take away from the home pros the golf market they made!

Too bad for club pro golfers, but that's the way it goes when pros in any one line don't use pros in other lines to help them . . . Sad part of the PGA picture is that the association is doing its big worrying about the TV tournament part of pro golf which is only about five per cent of the over-all pro business . . . The 95 per cent is pro business at clubs and other course outlets . . . When that slides away the golf club and ball manufacturers will take a beating on cheap clubs and balls like the retailing pros.

Pros at typical first class private clubs, and some municipal courses

where pro shops are Grade A merchandising operations, are making strong play for women's business and scoring very profitably . . . From what pros and pro salesmen tell us, the best thing that's happened for pro business in years is women working in pro shops . . . It's difficult to make a good profit in pro shop operations now with costs high and service demands extensive but a lot of pros say the best cash return they get on an item in the shop is on a smart golf saleswoman's salary and expenses.

It's going to be very interesting—maybe significant—to see how golf business women are fitted into the PGA business schooling program.

Some pros are saying they can hardly give away to caddies fairly new steel-shafted clubs they took on trade to boost the aluminum shaft boom . . . Next year will tell the story, and the answer probably will depend on advertising as the amateurs and pro experts certainly are not of one mind on aluminum . . . The amateurs who have been sold by the home pros seem to rate the aluminum shaft higher than the consensus of the playing pros.

Lake of the Pines GC, near Auburn, Calif., has two ninth holes . . . One is across a lake from the clubhouse and after playing it golfers can run their carts on a boat and get ferried across the lake for a luncheon break . . . Others can play the alternate ninth bordering the lake . . . First nine of the 1,300 acre resort development in the Sierra foothills in play . . . Second nine under construction . . . Paul Mil-

lard is architect . . . John Quick is pro.

Irondequoit GC in suburban Rochester, N.Y., puts aside plans for moving to new location . . . Irondequoit is 52 years old . . . It added its second nine in 1953 . . . Strikes holding up considerable clubhouse construction across the nation.

Donald (Doc) Giffin, affable and competent fellow who was Pittsburgh Press golf writer, then PGA tourney press agent, and now publicity man for Arhold Palmer and Mark McCormack has been named executive sec. Golf Writers Assn. of America . . . Managers, press agents and manufacturers associated with pros outside the McCormack stable are wondering "what the . . ."

One of golf's great and beloved women, Mrs. O. B. (Mom) Keeler died recently in Emory Hospital, Atlanta, after an illness of four months . . . She was the widow of O. B. Keeler, Atlanta Journal reporter assigned to Bob Jones during the 16 years and 80 championship competitions of Bob's career . . . Eleanor McIntosh MacAuliffe and O. B. were married in 1927 . . . He died in 1950 . . . They were a lively team at many championships and gloriously hospitable in their Distillery Hill home in Atlanta . . . Mom was a good reporter and writer, and had a lot to do with guiding Georgia girl golfers and rocking the cradle of the LPGA . . . Georgia State Women's GA named a championship for her . . . She and O. B. contributed immensely to golf when it was famous for fun instead of being headlined as a place where worried young men go to work in the hope of getting basketball player's pay . . . How

Continued on page 14

Graffis

Continued from page 10

old was Mom? . . . The romantic French line is that a woman never is old until she keeps wrinkles on her heart . . . By that count Mom died young.

E. W. (Pop) Harbert, 80, died following an automobile accident in Georgia in which his wife was seriously injured . . . He was father of Chick Harbert, 1954 PGA champion and now vp of General Development Corp . . . Pop was pro at Marywood CC, Battle Creek, Mich. for some years and at other Michigan clubs . . . He became a pro in the early 1900s . . . He was a good teacher and a pretty fair player who scored his age as late as 65 and for a decade after that . . . After retiring from Michigan club work, he continued to be busy teaching in Sarasota, Fla. . . The Harberts had been married 62 years . . . Besides Chick, a son Virgil of Sarasota and a daughter, Mrs. Mercedes Berger of Sarasota,

survive.

Maurie Luxford up and around again after removal of left eye . . . Maurie did one of his great jobs in getting the Buick Open pro-am going in smooth, merry spirit despite murderous pain for days . . . Then from Michigan back home to California where his eye operation was successfully performed by Dr. John London, the noted specialist who saved eyesight of Scotty Chisholm when it seemed that colorful old-timer was going blind.

I hope Marvin Ferguson makes a big bundle out of his new job as pres. Agri-Systems of Texas doing a national business in golf course design and construction supervision, irrigation system and turf consulting service for courses and architects and builders . . . Ferguson has done one of the most valuable jobs in golf and for golfers working with the USGA Green Section on and off since 1940 . . . When he resigned he was Mid-continent director of

USGA Green Section and National Research Coordinator, in the latter capacity getting together a wonder-working all-star team of turf scientists of immense value to golf . . . Ferguson, Texas A&M grad and once asst. prof, highly honored by scientific societies, authoritative writer on golf turf, veteran of service in two World Wars, is one of golf's sure enough Big Men.

Tom Mascaro of West Point Products made a memorable talk recently before North Jersey GCSA which has six of its veteran members retiring this year . . . Tom had some old slides he showed and with his reminiscences presented an entertaining history of how New Jersey supts. brought golf along in the area . . . Bill Monahan, retiring supt., Rock Spring Club, West Orange, N.J., was honored by his club with a big party . . . Monahan was there for over 40 years . . . His asst. Howard Anen, succeeds him . . . A feature of the part was tributes by Green Chmn, and other officials with whom Bill had worked . . . Club has a good retirement plan which, unfortunately, isn't too common with golf clubs . . . Monahan was one of the pioneers in the Rutgers University course management short course.

. . . Wm. Bommer of Acushnet was re-elected vp . . . Bill and his teammate Dick Young are sons of two really great fellows who played ball with pros on a marketing policy and were manufacturing and marketing geniuses.

Another record entry this year: Field of 112 in the 16th annual US Women's Open . . . Bob James, supt., University of Oklahoma course at Norman for 17 years and coach of the school's golf teams for nine years switches to supt. position at Tulsa's Cedar Ridge CC . . . Robert D. Rickey, MacGregor Golf executive reelected National Golf Foundation pres . . . Bob probably knows more pros than any other man in golf . . . He was brought up in golf business . . . His father, the late Clarence, was MacGregor's top pro exec for years. □



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