

# GOLFDOM Speaks out

## A Peaceful Solution

The unfortunate dispute between the PGA and the members of the tournament circuit has been brewing for a long time, but only now has it become apparent to many that the players were serious enough to break away. Whether or not the two groups join forces again—and there's a good chance they might—there is likely to be a residue of bitterness for years.

The important thing now, it would seem to us, is for the rival factions to reach some sort of peaceful—and permanent—settlement, even if they don't choose to operate again under the same banner. The game of golf has had all its needs of such squabbles.

GOLFDOM has supported the efforts and aims of the club professional for 42 years and will continue to do so, because our future, like his, lies in working for the betterment of the game. GOLFDOM also has many friends in the other camp and would like nothing better than to see the two parties settle their differences quickly and amicably. By the time this issue is printed, the tournament sponsors will have met and the PGA will have considered the proposal presented by Arnold Palmer, so it's possible the situation will have been resolved. However, should an agreement be impossible, GOLFDOM'S first duty is to the club professional and his members.

The manufacturers of playing equipment also have such a duty, and we urge them to do everything possible to help heal the wounds and prevent further bickering, which can only do immeasurable damage to the industry and to the game. Many years of time and effort have been spent in developing the concept of "pro line" equipment and in promoting the idea that the club pro is the last word in equipment and instruction, and it would be a tragic blow to the entire industry to have all this undone by the present feud.

Revenues from the tour—that is, from television and from players' entry fees—is used to operate the tour itself. The bulk of it is used for salaries, expenses, rental to country clubs and payments to sponsors. The remainder goes into a tournament fund. Thus, since the PGA isn't taking any of the tour money and the players aren't getting away with any money belonging to the PGA, it is apparent that the whole dispute hinges on a matter of principle, compounded by pride and personality conflicts. Of course, there are some who

contend that granting the players complete autonomy would allow them to gouge tournament sponsors and television for extra cash, but even so, money is not the basic cause of the dispute. Whatever the causes, a great deal of bad feeling exists and some of it is likely to remain for a long time.

As we see it, there are three possible outcomes to the dispute: (a) the two groups can get together again, with the tour being operated autonomously by the tour players but worked in some fashion under the PGA umbrella; (b) the players can make good their revolt and operate their own tour, in which case the PGA could logically figure it had just disposed of a bad headache and forget the whole thing, or (c) the PGA could retain enough talented players to feel justified in running its own tour in competition with the rebels.

If either of the first two occurred, golf, as far as the general public is concerned, would go on much as before. There would no doubt be some residue of ill will—and, in the case of (b), club pros might be prohibited from playing on the tour—but the average golfer would hardly notice the difference. Since television and the sponsors would be likely to go where the action is, the tour's public exposure would remain the same. However, if the third eventuality came to pass, there could be no end of problems, and the game's image couldn't help but suffer.

As in the more undisciplined days of professional baseball and football, rival golf tours could wind up in a bidding battle for new talent, and it isn't difficult to foresee a time when top college players would be weighing fancy offers from the two groups. Along with this would go the companion difficulties of competing for courses, sponsors and television contracts. This could really put the club pros and the manufacturers in a ticklish situation and nobody would come out a winner.

All this may seem a flight of fancy, but it has happened in other sports and it could happen here. Our hope—and it must be the hope of golfers everywhere—is that the two groups can get together again, work out their problems and go forward under the same banner. If that isn't to be, then the split should be clean, with no reprisals and no hasty moves made in anger that could do irreparable damage to the game of golf.