

Cure for the off-season doldrums:

If you're a pro and your course is under a blanket of snow, what do you do? Instead of heading teaching assignments, some pros organize and conduct golf tours for club members. It's work,

An annual occupational hazard confronting golf club professionals in those sections of the country where courses are weather-locked or snowbound from November until April is what to do with all that literally dead time.

The solution is an easy and even relieving one for the well-established and well-heeled. Just pack up the family and move to a warmer scene where a man can play all the golf he wants with not a worry in the world about tending the shop, keeping lesson appointments or setting up the member-guest tournament.

There are others who bridge the bleak gap to obvious advantage with interim teaching appointments in resort areas such as Florida, Arizona or the California desert country. There are alternative devices such as the indoor school at the Y.M.C.A. or the Town Hall, but there undoubtedly remains a cold, fretfully idle majority.

In recent years, a gradually increasing number of these pros have overcome the winter doldrums by assuming new roles as organizers and conductors of special golf tours. These include the familiar expeditions to Florida and the Caribbean, but the traveling golfer nowadays likes to roam even more widely, not only to Great Britain and Ireland, but to relatively "new" golfing grounds, such as those in Spain and Portugal—and even to the Orient, for those with a disposition to spend the large buck.

Experience has proven that the golf professional fits into this picture quite naturally because of his playing ability, the talent for organizing competitions and a practically automatic rapport with

his professional brethren in even the most distant foreign outposts. And those who have given it a try testify that the tour guide assignment provides more than stimulating fun and the broadening benefits of travel. It also can yield returns representing a tidy income supplement or even a major secondary enterprise.

Possibly typical of the pioneer pros in the field are Dave Rosen of New York City and Ed Whalley of Danvers, Mass.

Rosen has made quite a big business of golf tourism. He now has a firm known as Golf Tours, Inc., with an office at 21 West 35th St., where he operates a year-round indoor golf school.

Whalley, for some years the professional at Charles River CC in Newton Centre, Mass., retired from that position last year to set up his own business in golf bag covers and accessories. But he intends to continue with the golf tours he has handled for more than 10 years.

"We organize and sell golf tours on a real business basis," Rosen explains his role. "Generally, I line up about 20 a year and go along on probably eight myself." Most of Rosen's other tour assignments are distributed among such members of his school's staff as George Voss, Larry Leong, Joe Liss and Larry McKee.

Rosen does a fair percentage of domestic and North American business. "We have a certain number of tours to Puerto Rico, for example," he says. "I also develop charter trips for large industrial firms. Last year, I handled groups of 90 and 120 people on 'sales incentive' trips for Monsanto. We went to Point Clear, Ala., which is about 30 miles from

Mobile and has an excellent course and a fine resort hotel."

As Rosen points out, large companies provide the ideal opportunity for charter groups on



which the rates are lower than those for other groups which generally must be comprised of a minimum of 15 persons.

Any pro who might perk up

Pros turned tour guides

for warm-weather vacations or interim

but it can pay off

By **TOM FITZGERALD** Golf Editor, Boston Globe

over the charter advantage should proceed cautiously, however, because the Civil Aeronautics Board has some pretty definite regulations and definitions. In order to qualify, the travelers on a charter expedition must be members of an "affinity group...with some purpose other than travel," and each must have a minimum of six months' membership in the sponsoring organization.

A professional could, however, develop a credible premise for his own club's membership if he could stir up interest among a sufficiently large number, say 90 to 120. He also might work out something with his state or regional golf association.

Although no professionals were involved in the operation, except as cash customers, the Chicago District Golf Assn. last winter ran a series of 20 charter flights, totaling 3,200 members, to Spain.

The golfers from Chicagoland were based at the high-style Atalaya Park Hotel in Marbella, with five golf courses in the area. The trip, comprising seven nights and eight days, cost \$350 a person, including two meals, golf and air fare. The CDGA is planning a similar series of tours this winter to Greece at \$385 a person.

Rosen also has taken groups to Spain and to Portugal and is enthusiastic about the golfing opportunities. "There are some lovely and very interesting courses in Estoril (near Lisbon) and Algarve in Portugal, and along the Costa del Sol in Spain, starting up from Gibraltar," he says.

Late last winter in Portugal, Rosen met the internationally famous English professional, Henry Cotton, who makes his home there now. Dave cites a

real display of British aplomb by Henry.

Shortly after the area had been given a shake by an earthquake, the two were chatting at a cocktail party.

"I say, old boy," Cotton remarked to Rosen, "we've all had an actual Mulligan, haven't we?"

In contrast to Rosen and his Golf Tours, Inc., Ed Whalley operates on a strictly individualistic basis. "I really started on this to get a winter vacation," says the comparatively young and personable professional who is a graduate of Merrimack College. "Eventually, though, as I got a better feeling for it, it turned into something fairly profitable."

Whalley is willing to provide guidelines for other professionals. "A fellow can work things out with a travel agency," he says, "although I always have worked directly with the airlines, who have people specialized in their field. I have done business with domestic lines, but on trips abroad I have found it has worked best for me to make arrangements with the national airlines."

(Transoceanic airlines, generally, will handle the golf groups, but those most active in the field are TWA, Pan American, Canadian Pacific, Irish International, TAP Portuguese Airways, Iberia, Air France and Lufthansa.) Whalley specializes mostly in European travel to Ireland, Scotland, Spain and Portugal.

He provides the conditions under which he has operated. "You start with that unit of 15," he says, "and for every 15 I require a free trip with all expenses paid plus a commission of \$50 a person."

Because of rather frequent var-

iations, the golf pro-tour guide is not quick to quote trip rates until he is lining up a specific project. Whalley offers one for an example, though. Several years ago, he took a Boston group of about 40 on a 14-day trip to Ireland for a charge of \$385. A more current group quotation for a 15-day tour was \$634.

Whalley offers some general observations on his avocation. "When you are organizing your group," he says, "you naturally want it to be a mutually agreeable one. It is good for a pro to have men and women from his own club, but it isn't really necessary. Golf provides quite a bond in itself. You must be sure that everybody understands the requirements for foreign travel, like passports, and that these charges are not included in the price of the tour.

"The pro must make things interesting for his party on the golf course," he continues, "and try to get as many different people as he can. Among other important things to consider are the side trips, particularly shopping opportunities for the non-golfing wives in your group."

Whalley has an added asset on his tours in the presence of his attractive wife, Mary Rae, who accompanies him on as many as possible when she can make proper arrangements for their children. Mrs. Whalley has considerable know-how in the travel business. Before her marriage, she was an airline stewardess, and once was assigned to special duty of President Eisenhower's campaign plane.

The golf professional interested

continued on page 62

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TOUR GUIDES

continued from page 59

in keeping himself occupied with travel over those long winter months might follow Whalley's independent example. Or he might prefer to align himself with a travel agency.

Among the biggest is Golf Tours International at 49 West 57th St., New York City, a division of General Tours, Inc.

Manager of the golf division is Mrs. Shirley K. Tydor.

"Essentially," Mrs. Tydor says, "we are wholesalers of golf tours to other travel agents, to other groups and to interested golf professionals. Because we are exclusively devoted to this field, we can make things easy for the pro in his arrangements."

In addition to smooth travel and first-class accommodations, Mrs. Tydor concentrates on the availability of course facilities at the specific time a touring group is visiting.

She emphasized this in an article in last November's issue of GOLF Magazine. "Suppose you finally got to St. Andrews," she was quoted, "and found it was tied up for four days with a Scottish Butchers tournament?"

Whether or not his group has St. Andrews on its itinerary, the prospective pro-guide should emphasize items like these:

- price quotations for air fare and "land tour rate" which are packaged into the total;
- exceptions at some courses where green fees are not a part of the tour rate;
- baggage limits, usually including two medium-size suitcases totaling 44 pounds; plus additional charge for golf clubs, varying according to destination.
- definition of the term "all-inclusive," which usually covers hotel with two meals, but not lunch.
- availability and cost of self-drive automobiles. □

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