



by Herb Graffis
**SWINGING
 AROUND GOLF**

**Education is
 badly needed**

By getting Dr. Paul Alexander as director of education, the Golf Course Superintendents Assn. of America was lucky as well as foresighted. Alexander was at Clemson (S.C.) University from 1958 to 1969, then went with the United States Golf Assn. Green Section as agronomist for the Mid-Continent area. He knows the problems of golf turf managers from grass to people. Alexander's assignment is to conduct a "clearing house for the educational needs of the golf superintendent on the job."

The responsibilities, ambitions and investments involved in the work of superintendents warrant an immense budget for the program, but the painful fact is that there isn't anywhere near the amount needed. The GCSAA Scholarship and Research Fund, Inc., in 1969 was slightly over \$21,000, of which the GCSAA supplied only \$3,678; Toro and Jacobsen distributors each gave \$2,000; the National Golf Fund grant from the Professional Golfers' Assn. of America's National Golf Day campaign was \$11,440 and other contributors provided about \$1,300.

This year the National Golf Day grant for the scholarship part of

the GCSAA program is \$14,300. The USGA Green Section gets \$15,400 to allot to various turf research projects.

Figures such as the foregoing are nothing compared to the immense annual operating costs, increased investments, tax payments and other player spending. But they tip off every good businessman in golf that the educational programs in golf are far behind what is required.

Pat Williams, PGA's education director, probably has already been worth millions to pros and their players. Pat, himself, will admit that he has taken his classes beyond the kindergarten stage of business schooling in an exacting, unique field.

What golfers rarely realize is that all the club usually does is give the professional the chance to make a living in a limited, short-season market. And for what the pro earns, his services at a private or fee course determine just how well that course does financially.

What may prove to be the most profitable business educational group operation done in golf is the conference of secretaries and officials of the multitude of sectional associations. There were previews of this sort of work when the USGA Green Section put its road show around the country several years ago. Club presidents, green chairmen and owners of courses and superintendents got together, so that subjects discussed were to the top level.

Top level education is what is needed with the \$2 billion annual spending in golf business that GOLFDOM's survey indicated. That figure is conservative considering the ramifications of the golf course-real estate developments.

Club Managers Assn. of America has been pushing its educational and screening program, and it is advancing. How much the CCM (Certified Club Manager) rating will be reflected in club financial statements will be the real test of the plan.

Continued on page 11



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On September 1st the PGA's rating plan becomes effective with the Master professional getting top billing. The Apprentice entry to the PGA roster revives the original procedure of a youngster's basic training in pro golf.

GCSAA has not been able to devise a grading system, simply because if a course is in good condition, most of the time the man who runs it is a super superintendent; when the course isn't okay, regardless of explanations and GCSAA classification, the man in charge is out of luck.

In studying bales of information about the educational programs of the professionals, managers and superintendents, it will be noted that a lot is said about what the schooling will do for the three classifications of golf workers, but little is mentioned about what good will be done for the golfers, who eventually pay the bills.

There hasn't been nearly enough attention paid lately to the immense and rapid increase in the cost of golf. At private and fee courses prices have mounted so that millions of young people are being ruled out. Perhaps the awakening will come in time before golf itself through high costs kills its next bumper crop.

For the golf business man who wants to think five years ahead there are the pleasant present facts that playing equipment has the lowest price increase in golf and that the golf selling and playing season has extended. The longer the year for golf is due to the work of pros and golf resort owners. Golf playing equipment manufacturers, with few exceptions, have not been active in extending the selling, hence playing, season.

National Golf Day last year got a record \$110,000 to be distributed to golf improvement, welfare and relief funds. About 75 per cent was passed along to golf educational funds, such as the 26 regional cad-

Continued on page 16



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GRAFFIS

Continued from page 14

die scholarship funds, scholarships of the superintendents' association and Green Section scholarships and turf research and PGA Educational funds. The remainder was directed for use by the PGA funds for relief of indigent pros and their families, the United Voluntary Services and National Amputee Golf Assn., mainly for golf therapy of injured servicemen.

National Golf Day, May 30 this year, is the largest of the professional athlete contributions bouncing back to the public. It has raised at \$1 per amateur player and club pros. Playing pros never have had pleasant public relations value from this nation-wide operation, mainly because of a fault in the organization, which had the playing pros contributing only \$77 in 1969.

That sort of sorry showing the astute Joe Dey, the journeymen's

commissioner, is endeavoring to correct. He strenuously argues against the golfers' comment, "Why shouldn't there be a lot of millionaire pros; what do they give away?"

Dey is investigating the possibilities of tournament pros' tax exemptions for contributions from their prize money to their PGA National Golf Fund. Most of the circuit tournaments are for charitable enterprises after prize money comes off the top. Thousands of workers who sell tickets and do other work essential to the tournament spend their own time and money and get no deductions. That sets up the picture nicely for pro tournament prize winners' tax free contributions to the PGA's National Golf Day.

Tournament pros' managers, early beneficiaries of pro earnings, have been negligent in directing their clients toward the good public relations phases of charity tax exemptions. Gary Player with Na-

tional Open prize money going to the Cancer Fund and the USGA junior golf program; Lee Trevino and Chi-Chi Rodriguez giving easily with only locker-room exemptions to various needy causes, and Billy Casper with the church tithe, are the known and admired givers. Other top fellows in pro golf have given, too, but either because of modesty, self-defense or incompetent public relations of their managers, they have not been recognized.

Helen Macdonald Hassinger died recently, age 72, at Fort Myers, Fla. Helen's first husband, the late Bob Macdonald, was rated by brother pros as a really great teacher. Helen managed Bob's golf school in the Leiter Building, Chicago, the world's largest indoor golf teaching and practice establishment. She later had a successful school of her own in Chicago. It was an attractively decorated, light, conveniently arranged and notably neat place. □

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