

An End to the Letter Game

By VINCENT J. PASTENA

Come September 1st this year pros will find themselves ranked under a new Professional Golfers' Assn. system of classification. Delegates to the 53d Annual Meeting of the PGA, held in Scottsdale, Ariz., Nov. 17 to 21, passed three resolutions proposed by the executive committee that will discard the present letter classifications in favor of a system of titles that are more descriptive of the pro's job content, experience and training.

It is hoped that the new classifications will eliminate the confusion and inequities sometimes created by the present system. Undoubtedly, the descriptive titles will make life easier for those club officials involved in hiring pros. As one officer aptly put it, "I was always afraid we would run out of letters one day."

Under the new system, members will be classified within the following title categories: Master Professional, Head Professional, Associate Professional, Playing Professional, Assistant Professional or the transfer classifications (affiliate, professional emeritus, inactive and retired). Classifications for non-members working toward PGA membership are Approved Tournament Player, Apprentice I or Apprentice II. Here's how the new sys-

tem works in the active classifications (follow mobility scheme on accompanying chart).

- Assistant Professional: a member who is employed as a shop assistant or teacher. To be eligible for this classification, an individual must complete PGA Business Schools I and II. If he has completed school prior to December 1, 1960, credit will be extended for I and II. If he has accumulated 20 credits or more by December 1, 1969, he must complete School II only. In addition, effective June 1, 1970, candidates for this classification must have completed Home Study Program I. This classification will include all present Junior "A" and all assistant golf professionals elected to membership. Assistant Professionals cannot hold office, vote, attend executive sessions or endorse membership applications. Initiation fee, \$50; annual dues are \$37.

- Playing Professional: includes approved tournament players who participate in the PGA tournament program but are not employed as golf professionals, and former tournament players who are actively engaged in golf activities other than as a golf professional. Study requirements are similar to those for the Assistant Professional classification. How-

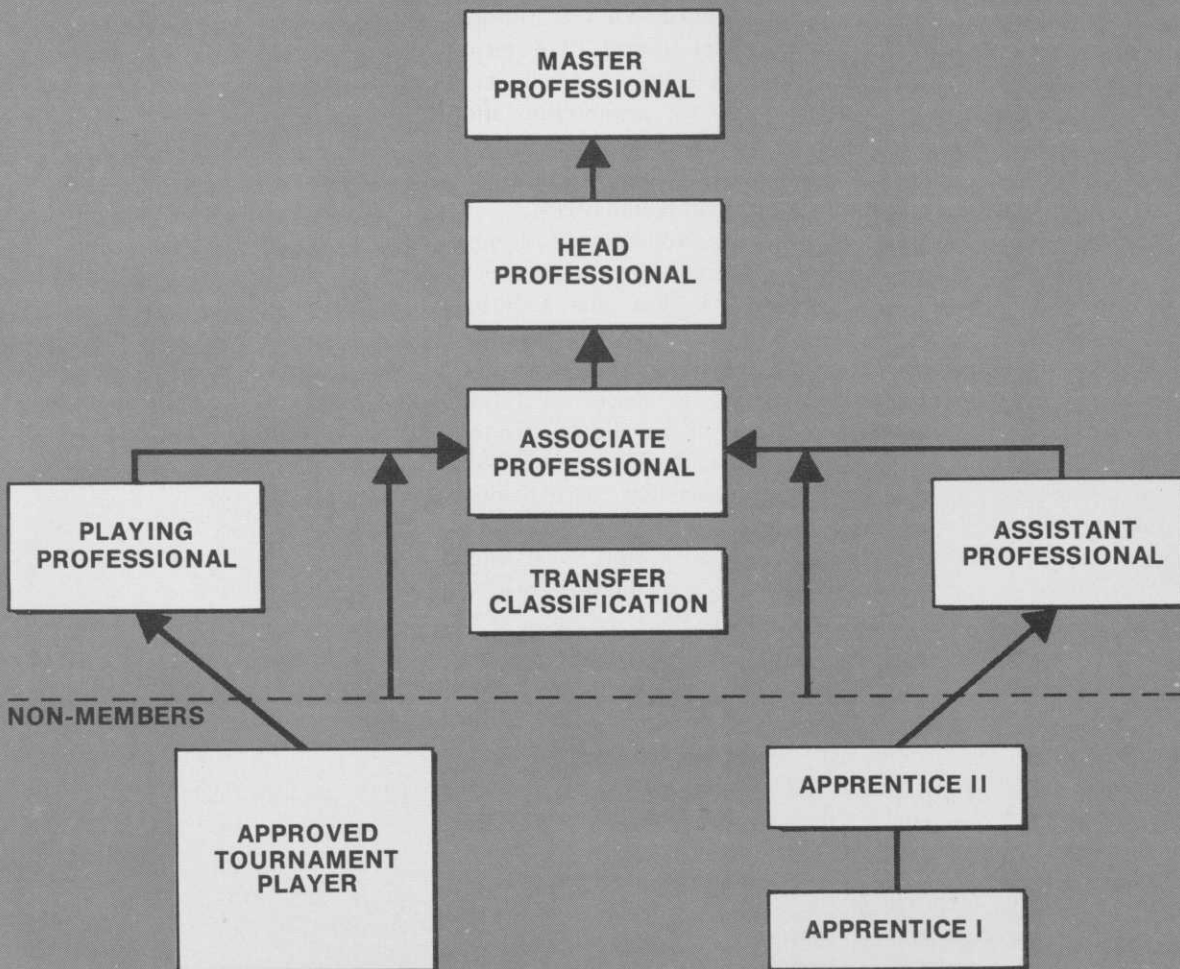
ever, Playing Professionals will have all rights and privileges. All present Class "A" tournament players will be included in this classification. Playing Professionals who leave the tour for a position as a golf professional will be transferred to the Associate Professional classification. Initiation fee, \$100; annual dues, \$72.

- Associate Professional: a member who is employed as a head golf professional but has not met the minimum requirements for PGA membership classification of Head Professional. Study requirements are similar to those for Assistant Professional. Individuals in this classification cannot hold office, vote, attend executive sessions or endorse membership applications. Initiation fee, \$100; annual dues are \$72.

- Head Professional: a member employed as a head golf professional who has met all requirements for this classification. To be eligible for this classification, an individual must have served as a member Associate Professional for at least one year and must pass the comprehensive examination for this classification. All rights and privileges are extended to Head Professionals. All present Class "A" members, not subject

continued

Delegates to the PGA Annual Meeting approved a sweeping change in the member classification system to halt the growing confusion and complexity of old designations



New PGA Classification System

LETTER GAME

continued

to transfer classifications, will be included in this category. However, the few members who presently have Class "A" status, but are serving in the positions of assistant professionals, will be placed in the Assistant Professional classification. Annual dues are \$72.

- **Master Professional:** a new elite classification for a member who has served as a head professional for a substantial period, who has proven experience and training and who continues to maintain the highest degree of excellence. Requirements for this classification: must be a Head Professional and have served in that capacity for at least 10 years, must pass comprehensive initial examination to this classification, must demonstrate or have demonstrated acceptable playing ability, must prepare acceptable thesis on golf instruction, must have completed Executive Management Seminar for golf professionals, must attend review seminars at least every three years, must have completed Home Study Programs Phase I and II, and should be active in sectional affairs. Annual dues, \$72.

- **Approved Tournament Player:** a non-member who has been granted permission to participate in PGA co-sponsored or approved tournaments.

- **Apprentice System (non-members):** a new registration program for golf professionals who are not members but who are working toward membership in the PGA. Effective Jan. 1, 1970, credit for experience gained either as a golf professional or an assistant golf professional will be given only for time served after an application for Apprentice status is filed. Credit will be given for employment prior to May 1, 1970, upon filing of the application. Filing fee, \$10. Apprentice I classification will be given to

those applicants who have at least six credits and have completed school prior to Dec. 1, 1969, or complete PGA Business School I. Apprentice II classification includes those applicants who have at least 24 credits and have completed school prior to December 1, 1969, or complete PGA Business Schools I and II. Apprentices I and II may attend sectional meetings, except executive sessions. Annual fees, \$17.

Along with creation of an apprentice program and Master Professional classification, other moves were made to upgrade association membership. In an effort to lure more college graduates into the profession, delegates passed a resolution giving candidates with bachelor's degrees from accredited four-year colleges eight credits toward PGA membership. A college graduate also may apply for membership after being employed in the golf profession for 32 months, rather than the normal 40-month period.

Another resolution provides that all credit for prior experience will be lost after a person has been out of the golf profession for more than five years, excluding breaks for school on a full-time basis or for military service. In addition, the PGA constitution now provides that an individual will be in violation of the code of ethics if he accepts a position without first consulting the officers of his PGA section or if he accepts a position which does not comply with the requirements of that section in whose area the position is available. This in essence gives individual sections more authority in such matters.

In a related action, the executive committee will begin a certification program for golf clubs. Certificates of approval will be awarded only to clubs which meet PGA physical and employment standards. The PGA head professional must be employed under a contract that is acceptable to his section. □

Par-threes Make It !

Par-three courses and their golf instructors received new recognition from the Professional Golfers' Assn. Delegates to the 53rd PGA Annual Meeting at Scottsdale, Ariz., passed a resolution that includes within the association's official definition of "Professional Golfer" individuals giving or supervising golf instruction at recognized par-three courses.

Through approval of the resolution, proposed by the Southern California Section, the PGA, in effect, has opened its doors to instructors at par-three courses by now making it possible for them to work toward association membership. This constitutional change overturns a recent ruling by the executive committee that time spent at par-three courses would not count toward the required 32 credits or 40 months for membership.

Another resolution, passed by the delegates, now makes it possible for Class "A" members who become owners of a par-three course to retain their Class "A" status. Formerly, under such circumstances, they were transferred to the "B" classification.

In addition, the delegates set up official criteria for a "recognized" par-three course. In order to receive PGA recognition, a par-three facility must have: 1) a minimum of nine holes; 2) a driving range; 3) a minimum length of 55 yards per hole; 4) a minimum total yardage of 1,000 yards for 18 holes; 5) a minimum of 14 acres, exclusive of clubhouse, golf shop and parking areas; 6) the course planted in grass, but may have artificial tee mats; 7) a pro shop on the course operated by a Class "A" member.