

WOMEN HEAD PROFESSIONALS?

Male domination of the golf course has eroded, albeit reluctantly. Some men will even give a begrudging respect to some of the female touring professionals' playing capabilities as "not bad for women." But mention the possibility of a woman head professional at a club and the whisper of resistance against women becomes a malevolent malediction.

Since the Professional Golf Assn. has agreed to allow members of the Ladies Professional Golfers' Assn. to attend its teaching and business classes, the next step to some is quite obvious. Many women will no longer be content to be assistants to their male counterparts, but will want to be considered for the head professional jobs when they become available.

GOLFDOM asked a sampling of club managers and officials what their attitudes were toward women being named head professionals, and the outcome of the survey is not surprising. In fact some of the standard clichés used are enough to make a liberated gal miss a one-inch gimmee.

Most club managers, keeping the attitude of their membership in mind, were soundly against making a woman a head pro. The main objection was the built-in prejudice which women would have to overcome. Few club officials would take it upon themselves to experiment with a woman head pro and take a chance on incurring the wrath of the membership. The reasons given against women were so hackneyed and time-worn, that one wonders how females ever made it onto the fairway.

Example: "A married woman with kids would absolutely not be considered," says one club manager. Or, "Women are not tough enough, either physically or mentally, to handle a head job," to "Women are too sensitive for a head pro job."

Most club managers felt that if a woman could meet the physical and mental standards needed to become a head pro, then she would "probably" be so un-feminine that a club wouldn't want her. Most clubs also felt that the present staff of male assistants would resent working for a

woman and if the job were open, the present assistant would be the first considered anyway. Several club managers also doubted whether they could work well with women because a woman head professional would "probably" cause a lot of bickering and dissension. Over 90 per cent of the club managers surveyed, felt that a woman would make a good assistant professional, in fact a male pro is smart to have one to handle "women's merchandising."

Perhaps the most obvious conclusions to be made from the above statements are that if the men want to keep the dominion of the pro shop in their hands, they will have to draw up a new set of clichés.

Several club managers who would be willing to take a chance on a woman as a head professional offer some time-worn phrases themselves. "Women have proven themselves to be capable assistants," one club manager says, "it's time they get a chance to step up." Another argument, which makes good sense depending on which side of the green you're on is, "If more women are playing golf at clubs, it is time that women step in as head pros." Perhaps the strongest argument towards considering women as head professionals comes from one club manager. "Women are proving capable themselves in other fields. Why not as head club professionals?"

Most professionals are not caught up in the rhetoric of categorizing women. Their most valid objection, which prevails at almost every club today, is that golf clubs have not been, and still are not, ready to accept women in any part of management. Many pros feel a woman is necessary for merchandising if you have a large number of women playing the course and some even concede the idea of having a man and woman as co-pros may be the thing of the future. But, with co-pros, the club must clearly define job responsibilities and areas of authority to prevent clashes.

The uphill battle women face in their desire to be named as head professionals is perhaps exemplified by one club official who feels, "Women members would prefer a man teaching them golf as opposed to a woman professional. And I don't know of many men who could accept the idea of being taught anything by a woman, let alone golf."—*Joe Doan*



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