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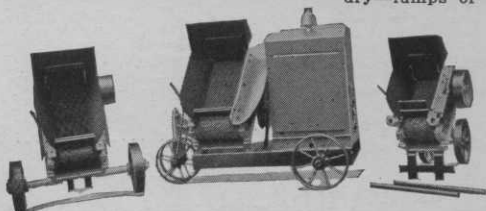
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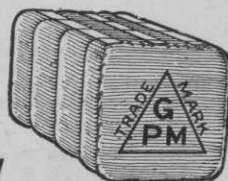
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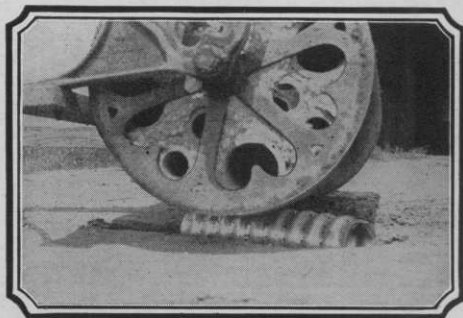
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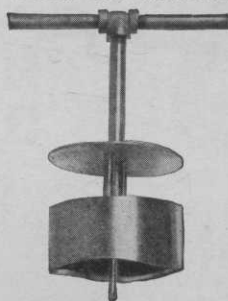
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Golfdom

THE BUSINESS JOURNAL OF GOLF

OCTOBER, 1928

Pros Probe Progress Problem of P. G. A.

By ALEX PIRIE, President P. G. A.

THE article in September GOLFDOM on the "P. G. A. Hour of Destiny Is Here," contains some opinions and recommendations with which I am not in agreement. This same article also contains many paragraphs that are full of good solid meat. Undoubtedly it has done some good in focusing the attention of P. G. A. members on matters that can be thrashed out by the delegates to our national meeting at Cleveland in November. Let us hope that every sectional association affiliated with the National P. G. A. will send their delegates to Cleveland with a clear expression of what they desire, as it is only by such means that wise decisions can be arrived at.

One of the major problems of the P. G. A. is that of acquainting not only its own members, but golf and country club officials, with the activities and status of this organization.

In the GOLFDOM article there are several evidences of lack of information and understanding. One of these points concerned the P. G. A. championship's award to its winner. As a matter of fact, this tournament is one of the greatest "big money" events of the year. Last year at Dallas the prize money—inclusive of railroad fare to Dallas for those who qualified—was over \$15,000, and the first prize is



Alex Pirie
pro at Old Elm
(Chicago District)

\$1,000. At the Five Farms Course of the Baltimore Country Club the prize money this year will be in the neighborhood of \$11,000, and the first prize will again be \$1,000. Chambers of commerce and other civic organizations are fully aware that an all-star pro event, such as the P. G. A. National, is good publicity, and bid accordingly.

Must "Watch the Step"

The potentialities of the P. G. A. as a money making organization for its members are of such a character that they can be sadly mishandled unless keen and truly interested singularity of purpose is exercised in advancing them. We must protect the P. G. A. against exploitation by promoters who may endanger the pro reputation for good clean sportsmanship or tend to undo all that has been done towards keeping the business of our organization free from taint. There is one detail of the interesting—but not by any means new—suggestion of a paid managing director of the P. G. A. made by GOLFDOM to which I, personally, am strongly opposed. That is the notion that the manufacturers of golf supplies contribute a part of such an executive's salary. No doubt there is plenty of work such a man could do to advance the interests of the P. G. A. as an organization more thoroughly

equipped to properly handle its affairs, but the question always arises: How are we to raise the money necessary to pay for the entire time and faithful services of such a competent, energetic and tactful man as would be required to fill this position? As executive salaries go in general business, such a man would command a yearly salary of \$15,000 to \$20,000, or he would not be the kind of a man we could use to the best advantage. Now where would there be any reason in nullifying the capabilities of such a man by starting him off to serve two employers, the professional golfer and the manufacturers of golf supplies? Indirectly, he might be of some profit to the manufacturers in the work he could do in connection with P. G. A. merchandising educational ambitions, but first of all his work would have to be intimate to us and us only. I consider this proposed participation of the manufacturers in the affairs of the P. G. A. would be an embarrassing alliance for all concerned.

At various national meetings of the P. G. A., consideration has been given the matter of increasing the dues in both national and sectional bodies, dividing same increase and applying the additional income to their respective needs. As is usual in all such matters, in any field, the camp is about evenly divided whether or not the dues shall be increased.

Membership Possibilities

Out of approximately 3,000 professional golfers in the United States I estimate about 2,000 could meet the present requirements and qualify for membership in the P. G. A. Say the dues were \$25.00 a year! The National organization's half of the income if all qualified professionals were members of the P. G. A. would be \$25,000 annually. On paper this amount looks as though we ought to be able to pay an able competent man to personally conduct and carry out any progressive policies which our organization may agree upon from time to time. As a matter of cold fact, however, the getting of this \$25.00 per year dues from our membership is very much in doubt as there exists a big question in the minds of many of our members whether such an increase in the dues is necessary. That's where we come right up against a blank wall in considering the employment of a "Landis" for the P. G. A.

and let me say that never has the game of golf needed a commissioner for the same reason baseball had to get its man. Also that I am positive professional golf will never require a man to maintain it in good standing with the public.

Membership Status

This year's membership report of the P. G. A. will probably show a decrease. The officials of the organization will not evade responsibility for this and will not try to hide it from pros or club officials. Such a loss will be a sign of strength because it will mean that the P. G. A. can say to the boys they must co-operate in a business-like way that will be a credit to their profession and properly reflect the highest principles of the organization or they don't get the certificate of membership to display in their shops. This certificate is more and more being recognized as the hall-mark of an honest square-dealing golf pro. The P. G. A. certificate of membership means something to the pro displaying it. It means to his club that it has a pro with whom his comrades in the profession have entrusted their reputations. It reminds the pro that he has a responsibility to live up to. It means to the manufacturer that he is doing business with a trustworthy man. These are undoubted facts and the P. G. A. is giving them the widest and most impressive circulation. What we all want to do is to get together for the advancement of the pro interests, which, of course, are all wrapped up in promotion of more golf and greater pleasure for the golfers.

If a managing director will help, let's have him, provided we can afford him. If we can't, then we will have to continue doing our level best along the lines which have resulted in the steady progress we have already made. In the meantime the P. G. A. asks of its members that they bear in mind all their responsibilities have not been discharged when they pay their dues. To get anywhere we must all work together, confining our criticisms to constructive subjects. If we do this and concern ourselves with that which concerns us the P. G. A. will soon secure for itself as high a position in the game of golf as any professional organization working for the interests of those who compose it can hope to attain.

Why Hide Pro Light Under Bushel?

By GEORGE SARGENT

I HAVE read with a good deal of interest the article in the September issue of GOLFDOM entitled, "The P. G. A. Hour of Destiny Is Here."

Headlines of this nature are, to say the least, somewhat of the startling order; but having known the publishers of GOLFDOM for a number of years, and having been an interested reader of GOLFDOM since its inauguration, I feel sure that our profession will at least receive fair treatment in its pages; and that in all probability this particular article was, at least from the editor's standpoint, meant for the best interest and intentions towards our profession. After reading the article under discussion, we must bear in mind the fact that neither the Professional Golfers' Association or the golf professionals individually have ever been advertisers or particular boosters of their own profession; but rather they have kept their own light under a bushel and have subconsciously taken the stand that actions speak louder than words; this alone has made the golf professional, and the golf profession very much misunderstood.

The P. G. A. "Hour of Destiny" article has put the profession into a position where it must defend itself; this might be done by using war or boxing methods; where the best method of defense is to attack the other fellow; or we can marshal our facts together and present our own point of view to the public. Personally I believe the time is ripe when the golf profession should abandon its policy of hiding its light under a bushel; and to prepare itself to get into the public limelight a little more than we have done in the past. I do not believe our profession has suffered or been held back in any way by its policy in the past; in fact I believe it has



George Sargent, pro at Scioto (Columbus, O.), former National Open Champion and a power in pro ranks

given the golfing public of the United States a feeling of respect and pride in its representatives of the golf profession.

P. G. A. Is On the Job.

In giving the ideas or recommendations in this article I wish it to be thoroughly understood that they are personal ideas and recommendations only, although I am also giving some actual facts to show that the Professional Golfers' Association of America has not been so far behind the time as the "Hour of Destiny" article would have us believe; but rather it has been guided by sound evolution in its progress and has sought to build slowly and thoroughly.

I wish to go back first of all to the little pioneer band of golf professionals, who left their native Scotch heaths and English downs to come to this country, which was then a golfing wilderness, to sow the first seeds of what is now the greatest golfing territory on our earth. These men have been called everything but Christians: they are supposed to have lowered the dignity of our profession, dragged the name of golf profession in the mud and otherwise so badly abused it that we are still more or less suffering from the shock and degradation of their doings. Unfortunately they never came to their own defense; so the golfing public believed anything and everything that was ever said or written of the golf professional. Thirty years ago there were very few golf courses, or golfers in the United States. Today the United States leads the world both in golf courses and in golf players; thus in less than thirty years this country has risen from the very bottom of the list to the topmost rung of the ladder. Who built the foundation to this wonderful success and was responsible for sowing the first seeds of knowledge

that were to raise, amongst hosts of others, such golfers as Travis, Travers, Ouimet, Evans, Von Elm, Bobby Jones, MacNamara, McDermott, Brady and Hagen whatever their individual failings may have been? That pioneer band deserves and should have the credit of laying the foundation and doing most of the missionary work that has made this country the foremost leader in the golfing world both in players and courses.

What P. G. A. Faced.

From the year 1900 to 1916 the golf profession apart from one or two attempts to organize, was largely an individual affair. Each professional was striving to the best of his ability to boost and teach the game and to further its interests as much as possible. In 1916 the Professional Golfers' Association of America came into being. With a territory that was bounded by the Atlantic and Pacific oceans on the east and west, with Canada and Mexico on the north and south, the originators of the P. G. A. were confronted with the next to impossible proposition of banding together a few hundred golf professionals who were scattered over millions of square miles.

In spite of this situation much good was accomplished from both the standpoint of the profession and golf interests in general. They first organized a match play championship. Before the days of gate fees, Mr. Rodman Wanamaker very generously financed the championship each year, donating some \$3,000, and valuable medals; also donating a very fine challenge cup. Upon the advent of gate admissions in 1922 it was mutually agreed by Mr. Wanamaker and the P. G. A. of America that in view of gate admissions it was possible for the association to finance its own championship. So successful has been the tournament in recent years that it has now assumed a position of one of the three national championships of the United States. More than \$10,000 is given in prize money each year for this event.

Gave U. S. Standing.

Prior to 1921 international golf from the standpoint of this country was at a very low ebb. The British had been able to walk off with our championships whenever they felt like it. So discouraging had the situation become that it was decided as a method of defense by the P. G. A. of America in conjunction with Golf Illustrated magazine to solicit funds to send over

a team of professionals to compete in the British championship. Twelve of our leading professionals were selected and sent over in 1921 with the happy result of Jock Hutchinson bringing, for the first time, the British Open championship title to this country. Since then, with the help of Walter Hagen, Jim Barnes and Bobby Jones, it has made practically an annual pilgrimage to the United States.

The National Open championship of the United States is now undoubtedly the largest tournament in the world. Twenty years ago sixty or seventy players was a full size entry; this year some eleven hundred entered. The P. G. A. not only foresaw but predicted this tremendous growth, and was able to outline a program to take care of this large entry which was accepted and is being used by the United States Golf Association very successfully.

The P. G. A. in suggesting this program is saving the golf professional tens of thousands of dollars in travelling expenses and time each year. In recent years the P. G. A. in conjunction with the P. G. A. of Great Britain has inaugurated and placed on a permanent basis an international team match between American and British golf professionals. This is called the Ryder cup team match, and is alternately played for every other year in this country and Great Britain; each country caring for its own expenses.

P. G. A. Achievements.

The P. G. A. of America I may say has now in the neighborhood of two thousand members and is still very rapidly growing; it owns its own magazine which is published and mailed to all its members each month. There is also a benevolent fund, which, although I am sorry to say its funds are rather limited, has nevertheless played a very important part in the lives of some of our members.

I cite a few of the activities of the P. G. A. not to show that the P. G. A. is all it should be or all that it could be, but simply to show that in the short period of its existence it has done a mighty fine work and is undoubtedly on a very good foundation from which further progress can safely be made.

Getting back to the "Hour of Destiny" article: the advice given, if I read it correctly, is that we should place a suitable man in charge of the P. G. A. affairs: one who understands exactly what we need and could devote his whole time and efforts on behalf of the golf profession. I