

Pro Business Men Fed-Up on Chronic Whining of Cripples

As Told by

A PRO NAMED "EDDIE"

to Herb Graffis

SEE THAT GOLFDOM's 1931 season survey shows 27% of the U. S. golf courses are daily fee or public. That should be the most significant news the pros have read in many a year.

Unfortunately, to a lot of the fellows it just means 27% of the courses are not private. Those fellows will go on complaining about department store competition, the sad way they are being pushed around by manufacturers instead of being teacher's pets, and squealing about the members buying wholesale and other raw deals they are getting from the clubs.

I leave it up to you whether it's cause or effect—this bellyaching business of the pros who have the most trouble. My own opinion, after 25 years in pro golf, is that the fellows who attend to their own knitting instead of depending on outside factors for help are birds who are sitting pretty. Too often squawks are alibis for errors of omission and commission by the pro who is crying. Let the wolves howl at me for making this statement. The pros who are real successes will back up every word I say.

Pro's Lot Not All Tears

Pro golf is not a bad business by a long way. Compare the operating expenses, investment and profits of a pro shop run by a pro who studies his business and who is on the job, with the same items in other small retailing businesses. Let these boys who are crying look over the statistics on business failures in 1931 that Bradstreet's compiled. More failures than in any other year since Bradstreet began getting up these figures! Still the total of 26,381 was only 1.25% of the companies in business. The retail clothing stores lead with 3,769 failures. And don't tell me pants and coats aren't more necessary than golf clubs and balls. Even the banks had 1,556 "suspensions," as bank failures are tactfully tagged.

Think about those figures for a few minutes and you will appreciate that the pros got by quite nicely, everything considered. The smart fellows in the pro business will continue making money because they realize what they are up against as merchants and are depending on their *own* business ability to earn a profit. No one manufacturer these days could give the pro a break that would assure a big, steady profit and a command of the market even if the manufacturer wanted to.

What some of the boys don't seem to appreciate is that the pro business these days is up against a changed set of conditions. The pro not only has to be a salesman of golf instruction and equipment, but more than ever before a salesman of golf. Private clubs are competing strenuously for members. The pro who can help his club get members by giving his club the reputation of having the best pro department service and by showing the membership prospects evidence of how a pro department is run for more pleasure to the members is the pro who is "in" at this time. That is strictly up to the pro and he can't complain about any manufacturer or member condition if the pro department falls down in this respect.

Where Pro Means \$\$\$\$

The pro has the greater part of the cure for his present complaints right in himself. A lot of teamwork is needed, of course, but the individual who is abusing this fellow and that condition had better go into a huddle with himself and see if some of the original fault isn't with himself. Take the fee course and public course situation as revealed by that 27% figure. That percentage means 1,243 fee and public courses in the country. And any pro who knows how things stand at these courses will admit readily that there aren't 100 first class already-developed pro jobs at all of these courses!

That's positively painful because of all the places where a smart pro, given latitude to work out his ideas, could make money for himself and his employers, the fee courses are the foremost. The same thing holds good at the public courses because the value the public receives from this play facility depends a great deal on how the pro service functions at the plant.

Take the average private 18-hole club. It has about 300 active men and women players who constitute the pro market. At the usual fee or public course in any good-sized district there are at least 1,000 fairly habitual players in the course of a season. What a vastly increased market a pro has there as compared with the field before the private club pro!

The fee course pro is master of his own destiny if he works at bringing players to the course, either as individuals or in trade or society tournaments. The more players he brings in, the more money he makes for the owners of the course and the more money he makes for himself.

Sell Selves to Owners

It is perfectly true today that the majority of fee course owners don't realize how getting a good pro on a mutually profitable basis means more net cash to the owner at the end of the year. It also is true that many municipalities don't pick fully qualified men but try and operate with the man who will work for the least money. Correcting that situation is a propaganda job for the farsighted individual pros, and the national and sectional PGA organization. What has to be done is to show these fee and public course officials that there are plenty of good business men in pro ranks—men whose employment at a good price will be a bargain. That work has to start by the pros talking about themselves being business men, capable to handle their problems like other retailers handle problems without throwback to methods and policies that are inferior and antiquated in 1932.

When pros enter into any club buying deal that insists on cash in advance from PGA members it looks to me like there is lack of consideration given to the building up of pro reputation for business, at least with respect to credit. The inference from such a deal is directly contrary to the facts of PGA members' credit being excellent as small retailers go. However, those who might be considering hiring a good pro for a job with a good guarantee and opportunity won't go prying much further into

the credit picture with the hasty, but erroneous conclusion that was set before them by the ill-starred assembly deal.

That's one of the incidents that we might have been able to pass over in former years but now every little movement of the pros and their organization has a meaning all its own.

The unemployment situation again emphasizes the importance of pros' individual and collective action. Think about there being 5,691 golf clubs in the U. S. and only 3,079 pros in club jobs, with probably 400 pro-greenkeepers added! You know, too, how many municipal and fee courses are going without pros, and how a good pro at any of these places would make money for all concerned.

I mention that employment angle to show what a big field the pros have before them as a major detail in solving the pros' problems. Whose fault is it that these jobs are open? It's our own. It's something that we as pros can't blame on anyone except ourselves because we need to do more of a job of selling ourselves as a group.

It looks to me like every fellow who keeps constantly whining about the pros getting a raw deal is doing the pro cause far more harm than he can conceive. There are evils in the golf business adversely affecting us that are not our fault. We can attend to them in due time but in the meanwhile let's see that the fellows get a different angle on the picture now and begin their job of putting the golf business on a perfectly happy and profitable basis by starting at the same place charity begins—at home. We've got a great story to tell for ourselves but I'm saying to a lot of the boys they are making people unwilling to listen to us on any subject because so many of our number keep eternally whining for help instead of thinking out and working out their own salvation.

Book Wanted

R. OTTO PROBST, treas., Erskine Park G. C., 334 N. Hill st., South Bend, Ind., wants copy of Colt and Alison's *Golf Course Architecture*. Will pay \$5 for copy, which is premium over published price. Write him before sending copy.

SOME WELL constructed fee courses tried to boost trade by 25c green fees during latter part of 1931, but the cut was a decided flop as a business getter. Maintenance suffered to extent that future repair cost will be heavy.



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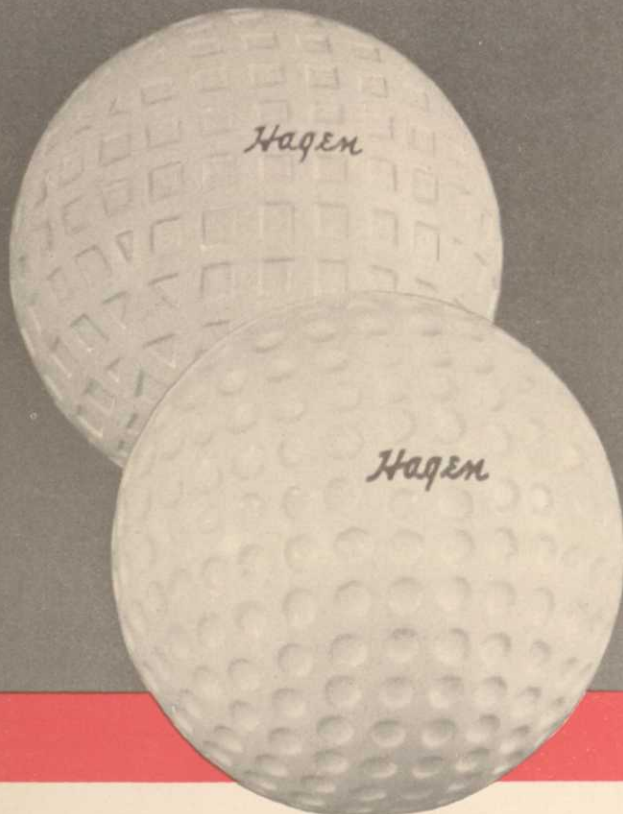
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creased pro shop sales. When the hands grip this soft pliable surface they adhere—they sink vise-like into a grip that stays put. Wet hands in rain—hands that perspire freely—or hands that are dry as a bone cannot slip. Don't fail to show clubs in your shop this year with the new Hagen-Layco grip.

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Selling Hagen Balls for Profit

DURING the year of 1931 we were fortunate to increase the sale of the Hagen ball by 200 per cent—three Hagen balls sold in 1931 to every one in 1930. With this in front of us, we can safely say that the Hagen, in the light weight, really went over. The ball must have sold itself because there were no fancy cut-prices to lure innocent players to use it. It was a healthy, profitable piece of merchandise for pro shop sales—so naturally it went over. Now, swinging into another year, it looks as if you'll sell twice as many Hagens. In the new weight it's really the finest ball we've ever built. And it's still backed up with a policy of rigid price maintenance. Go after your share of the profitable business—sell the Hagen ball.

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Los Angeles, 730 S. Grand Ave. Seattle, 1110 Second Ave.

Soil Characteristics in Relation to Golf Courses—Clayton O. Rost, Assoc. Prof. of Soils, U. of M.

Fairway Grasses—John Montieth, Jr.

Trees for Golf Courses—Edward G. Cheyney, Prof. of Forestry, U. of M.

Control of Gophers and Other Rodents—Herbert L. Parten, Extension Entomologist.

Plant Diseases and Their Control—John Montieth, Jr.

Weed Control through Chemicals—A. C. Army, Assoc. Agronomist, U. of M.

Report of Nat'l Greenkeepers' Assn. Convention delegates of Minnesota Greenkeepers' Assn.

February 17.

Mechanical Equipment for Golf Course Maintenance—A. F. Moyer, Chief Eng., Toro Mfg. Co.

Engine Driven Mowers for Fairways—R. S. Kinkead, Chief Eng., National Mower Co.

Landscape Architecture on Golf Courses—Lewis Longley, Asst. Prof. of Horticulture, U. of M.

Golf Course Architecture—Paul N. Coates, Ramsay County Eng.

Analysis of Public Golf Costs and Revenue—Paul N. Coates, Ramsay County Eng.

Recent Developments in Golf Course Maintenance—John Montieth, Jr. (round table discussion).

Harold Stodola, Sec., Minn. Greenkeepers Assn., at the Keller Golf Course, 516 Aldine St., St. Paul, Minn., will furnish complete details to interested greenkeepers, pros and club officials.

Rutgers' Short Course Program Is Announced

RUTGERS University College of Agriculture will hold its fourth annual Short Course in Turf Management Feb. 22-26. The program of the course, as announced by Prof. F. G. Helyar, director, is well rounded and will give attending students an excellent survey of the latest developments in the science of turf management.

The course is open to residents of the U. S. over 18 years of age. Other than a registration fee of \$5.00 and a \$1.00 fee for lecture outlines, there is no tuition. The work will consist of lectures and discussions, with laboratory demonstrations where possible. Enrollment is limited to 20 persons.

The program is as follows:

Monday

Modern turf management.....

.....Dean J. G. Lipman
Soil types and plant growth. Prof. L. L. Lee
Soil Physics—Structure, aeration, moisture supply, etc.....Dr. J. S. Joffee
Drainage—Natural and artificial.....

.....Prof. E. R. Gross

Tuesday

Principles of soil and plant chemistry
.....Dr. J. S. Joffee
Natural supply of plant nutrients from the soil.....Dean J. G. Lipman
Nature of commercial fertilizers.....

.....Prof. A. W. Blair
Use of commercial fertilizers.....

.....Prof. A. W. Blair
The nature of soil acidity and its detectionProf. A. L. Prince

Forms of lime and their use on turf
.....Mr. H. R. Cox

Wednesday

Fertilizer tests at New Brunswick...
.....Dr. H. B. Sprague

Soil micro-organisms and plant nutrition Dr. R. L. Starkey

Compost materials and composting...
.....Mr. H. R. Cox

Structure and function of plants.....
.....Dr. H. B. Sprague

Characteristics of good turf plants...
.....Dr. H. B. Sprague

Thursday

Climatic adaptation of turf plants...
.....Dr. H. B. Sprague

Soil adaptation of turf plants.....
.....Mr. E. E. Evaul

Seeds of turf plants.....Miss J. G. Fiske
Inspection of seed testing laboratory..

.....Miss J. G. Fiske
Turf infesting insects and their controlProf. C. C. Hamilton

Weeds and their control..Dr. H. B. Sprague

Friday

Turf diseases and their control.....
.....Mr. E. E. Evaul

Starting new turf.....Dr. H. B. Sprague
Renovating poor turf.....Mr. E. E. Evaul

Care of turf.....Dr. H. B. Sprague

Advanced Courses Also Offered

For students who have taken the one-week course in turf management, there will be two advanced courses each of 2½ days' duration, offered during the week of Feb. 29-March 4. Course-A will deal with various phases of plant growth; course-B will consider engineering problems. The courses will run concurrently from Monday morning until Wednesday noon, then will be repeated during the remainder of the week, thus allowing students to take either or both subjects.

Don't NEGLECT your fairways



Use Urea On Your Greens

Urea is recommended by the U. S. Golf Association. It contains 46% nitrogen (55.9% ammonia) in the same soluble organic form as nitrogen in liquid manure. It is both quick-acting and long-lasting, and does not leave any undesirable residues in the soil. It gives the grass a healthy, dark green color, and produces unequalled results in spring, summer or fall.

NO golf club can prosper if it fails to please its playing members. And to playing members the big thing is the condition of the course.

Don't neglect your fairways. Thicken up your turf and produce luxuriant growth by the use of Nitrophoska—the *concentrated, complete* fairway fertilizer. Nitrophoska is four times as rich in nitrogen, phosphoric acid and potash as the ordinary complete fertilizer. One ton is equal in plant-food to four tons of ordinary fertilizer. Moreover, all of its plant-food is soluble and quick-acting. And, because it is granular, it is as easy as wheat to broadcast. Early spring application of 200 pounds per acre produces marvelous results on fairways—gives you *better turf at low cost*. Order now from your supply dealer or direct. Synthetic Nitrogen Products Corporation 285 Madison Ave., New York.

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Winter Is Season For Manager to Plan Policy Changes

By HENRY DUTTON

THERE IS probably no busier group of individuals than the golf and country club managers. Because of the very nature of golf club operation with its uncertainties, sudden peak loads, and the other ramifications which characterize the service the average country club must provide for its membership, the manager has little time during the season to ponder, to plan, and to devise ways and means for increasing business or introducing new ideas.

He must bear much of the detail of his management himself, whereas his brothers in the larger town clubs may delegate authority to their subordinates. Consequently the golf club manager must do the bulk of his thinking during the winter months. It is therefore not amiss at this time to give consideration for the plans of the coming campaign of 1932.

Naturally, we are all desirous of being like the man who, having had his legs run over by a steam roller and while they were hustling him to the hospital, said, "my pants needed pressing anyway." We have been able to discover no real foundation for optimism concerning the season of 1932; yet on the other hand, it is not going to help anyone if the managers lay down and take bad business for granted.

The American people have always been very strong for the slogan "Where there is life there is hope" and as long as our clubs are *continuing to do business* there is still an opportunity to better the situation as it exists.

Membership Problem Is Keen

The principal problem in most country clubs will be that of membership and it seems to me that although it may not be the manager's job in many clubs to concern himself with this phase of its business, he certainly can prove invaluable to the organization which employs him, if he will give considerable study to the membership and devise ways and means of maintaining the club's roster at its present strength and to determine also by investigation and study what methods may be used to increase the membership to full

strength by the addition of new members.

After membership, comes the question of volume in club departments. This of course is effected materially by the decline in membership but we know that there are many innovations being tried by clubs in various parts of the country to attract a greater amount of patronage.

Building Departmental Gross

It takes the form in some clubs of business promotion on the part of the manager in the winter months and the making of contacts with brokerage houses, banks and other organizations of high calibre which hold golf outings during the season and attempting to interest them in the facilities which his club is able to offer. This is particularly beneficial to clubs located some distance from the city whose members give most of their patronage to it over the week-ends. In these clubs there are two or three days in the week when business is very slack, and the entertaining of such parties in no way interferes with the playing privileges of its membership.

There has been a plan adopted in some clubs, to offer special types of membership. One club offers a morning membership whereby, at reduced fee, individuals may have the use of the course until 1 o'clock, except on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, but are given no other privileges in the club.

Junior memberships have been tried with success and we have lately heard of a type of membership which gives the privileges of the club and its departments, but which provides that a green-fee must be paid when the members use the golf course.

There are many other ideas which have been tried out with considerable success in the last year for the purpose of building business during those days and hours least used and to bring a greater amount of volume to the various income bearing departments.

Add Attractions to Lure Patrons

Frequent tournaments, sweepstakes and special events, not only on the golf course