

MASTER PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION

BY

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I.

The feeling that golf has not reached the potential in Canada that it has in other countries is true. There are many reasons for this reality in my opinion; we, as Canadians, tend to treat golf as a secondary sport, mainly because of our climatic conditions and resulting short season; also, unlike sports such as skiing and auto racing, too few of our golfers, either professional or amateur, put forth the effort for international acclaim. I personally tend to put a portion of the blame on our school system and golf clubs for not making the game of golf available to young Canadians through the early school years; our universities are also at fault in not granting athletic scholarships to those who have the mental aptitude as well as the physical skills. As a result, many of our top young golfers end up in the United States where they can get these scholarships.

Golf has great potential in this country and I feel that the Canadian P.G.A. has the responsibility to be a leader in this area. One of the most important vehicles needed is a National Golf Foundation. This foundation would be a non-profit organization, developed solely for the purpose of promoting every aspect of golf, including golf course maintenance, golf course design, club house organization, design and maintenance, tournament procedures, etc. This foundation would be funded entirely by golf clubs, associations, clothing manufacturers and agents, greens equipment manufacturers and agents and golf club

manufacturers and agents.

Another area that the C.P.G.A. can promote golf's potential is in the area of instruction. I feel that it is essential that the C.P.G.A. and its professionals break down the barriers of the teachers' unions in this country, and obtain the necessary rights to instruct golf within the school systems. We should also extend our P.G.A. golf camps into remote areas where people are starved for proper instruction; obtain a national sponsor, and, in the winter time, have a traveling P.G.A. caravan covering the various areas of the country, teaching the game of golf properly. The very heart of the golf business is our ability to teach and play, and our association must take every measure to make the golfing public aware of the value of good instruction, as well as promoting the stature of our teaching abilities.

Although golf course construction has slowed considerably in Canada, I believe that we, as professionals, should have more say in the future of golf complex design. Obviously, the golf course architect is the man to plan the physical layout of the course, but as golf professionals, we should be consulted regularly on such matters as course playability, traffic patterns, and, particularly, club house and pro shop design.

In conclusion, if our Canadian Professional Golfers Association and its members can implement these and other positive new projects and ideas, not only the very game of golf itself will

move toward its potential, but also the entire golf business and we, as golf professionals.

II.

Evaluating a particular job may appear somewhat complicated, however, if taken step by step, it can be relatively simple.

To begin with, any job should be evaluated from a personal view, in addition to the more obvious financial view. In both cases, the pros and cons should be equally considered. The bottom line or net result will give you your final evaluation of the job.

When various jobs come open, naturally the retainers vary just as club service charges differ from club to club; pension contributions, health plans and golf car arrangements are but a few of the additional variables to be considered in any job evaluation.

One consideration that is sometimes overlooked is that of the location of the club and how the community suits your family's needs and life style. The cost of housing, taxes and day to day living expenses, should also be considered. Many individuals look only at the business side of the job, overlooking the personal considerations.

A question one should ask himself is what is the particular club membership going to expect of him and will he be able to successfully fulfill their needs? Is he competent enough in his instruction skills? Does he feel he is an adequate merchant? Is his personality going to clash or coincide with that of the

type of members he will be serving? To fully understand what the job entails and to further evaluate your own ability and expectations is the whole idea behind a complete evaluation of any job. Your own peace of mind in addition to the obvious financial peace of mind should be equally considered.

The golf professionals role at the club has changed considerably over the past few years. Professionals have been forced to become merchandisers, and because of the financial mystique surrounding his job, many clubs believe that the professional is making much more than he actually is. This point should always be in one's mind when he is talking to a club about a job opening, because invariably the figures he might obtain regarding sales and profits are ambiguous. If he is seriously evaluating the job, he should try and obtain additional information from suppliers and, if possible, from the outgoing professional. Combining these three sources of information should give you a better picture of potential revenue through sales.

In summarizing the different aspects of a job in importance then, I would have to evaluate it in two ways - from the personal as well as the financial viewpoint. Both should be evaluated on a net basis. As I feel this relates to a head professional job opening, I am using this as an example, as follows.

A. Financial

Revenue

- 1. Retainer
- 2. Club storage revenue
- 3. Merchandise sales
- 4. Golf car revenue
- 5. Lessons revenue
- 6. Range revenue
- 7. Pension, health insurance benefits
- 8. Bonuses
- 9. Other revenue

Expenses

- 1. Cost of staff
- 2. Cost of sales
- 3. Cost of insurance
- 4. Cost of benefits for staff
- 5. Telephone and other office costs
- 6. Utility cost if applicable
- 7. Range costs
- 8. Misc. costs

Net dollars

B. Personal

Questions to be answered:

- 1. Cost of housing - taxes
- 2. Language of location
- 3. Schooling that is available in area
- 4. Cost of food - shopping available?
- 5. Cost of everyday living expenses
- 6. Churches in the area
- 7. Social associations
- 8. Sports facilities available
- 9. Restaurants

* These questions should all be compared to your existing living conditions - are adjustments going to be for the better? Too difficult, etc?

III.

The club professional has basic responsibilities to fulfil, some more obvious than others, but all are equally important if he is going to be successful in his position.

One of his foremost responsibilities is to be a leader in golf, both within the club and in the community as a whole. In order to be a successful leader, the professional must be a student and teacher of the game, as well as being a better than average player. He should be continually working to improve his teaching and playing skills.

His organizational ability should be invaluable to his club. As a person having the physical skills and game expertise, it should only be fitting for him to be totally involved in organizing the various golf programs, clinics, special tournaments, promotions and outside activities. Working with the captain of the club, the ladies chairman, the junior chairman, and the greens chairman should be a must. I also feel that the golf professional should attend all Board of Directors meetings, so as to keep himself current with club activities and problems.

Playing golf with as many of the members each year should be very high on the priority list for the professional and his staff. The establishment of a "Beat the Pro" competition is just one way to encourage play between the professional staff and the members.

The professional should have polite, neat and courteous people in his employ, and strive to operate an efficient merchandise sales, repair and service operation. He should be an ambassador for the club and act in a manner fitting of his position as their professional; it is also the professional's responsibility to make certain that his staff conduct themselves in a similar fashion.

The one thing that must be foremost in the professional's mind is that he is selling himself and his services. Public relations is most important and regular communication with the sports media, service clubs and golf associations are invaluable public relations.

A golf professional should never lose contact with the membership by being a bad listener; always give the other person the right to be heard - he will respect you for listening even though you feel he may be wrong. Further, it is important that a good golf professional be pleasant, courteous, ambitious, interested, friendly, but yet firm; he must be a part-time psychiatrist and psychologist, but above all, he must be dedicated to the game and to his membership. To further clarify what I feel are the basic responsibilities of the successful golf professional, I have broken them down in the following areas:

THE GOLF PROFESSIONAL - HIS DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

<u>Businessman</u>	<u>Teacher</u>	<u>Administrator</u>	<u>Ambassador</u>	<u>Player</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Merchandising b) Administration of staff c) Association with golf suppliers d) Repair business e) Golf car operation f) Collection of green fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Clinics b) Group lessons c) Club fitting d) Winter lessons e) Personal lessons f) Playing lessons g) Teaching research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Enforcement of rules b) Golf rules c) Organization of events d) Tournament co-ordinator e) Advisor to Board on course organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Senior clubs b) Playing Pro-junior ladies events c) Introduction of new members d) General club public relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Participate in local event b) Play with members c) Play in charity events d) Put on demonstrations

IV.

It is widely agreed that education of the P.G.A. golf professional is the single most important thing that the C.P.G.A. can provide. As a C.P.G.A. member, I have an obligation to encourage my assistants to attend as many business schools as possible, read articles on various aspects of the business, but most important, to pass on my knowledge and training. Without this attitude by all head professionals of the C.P.G.A. our association will disappear. The training of my assistants is not only very important to me and my operation, but it is also my duty as a C.P.G.A. member. Ideally, I would set out a training program for my assistants broken down into two basic areas.

The first area would be the theoretical application and would consist of specific reading: a) Golf's Professional Man b) History of Golf in Canada c) Golf Shop Merchandising d) Golf Operations Handbook e) Rules of Golf, etc. In addition to the reading aspect, I would encourage my assistants to attend as many of the special seminars and clinics as possible. Periodically throughout the season, I would chat with my staff to ensure that they were doing work on their own and to give them my interpretations of their thoughts. Above all, I would not try to sway them to my way of thinking, but encourage them to develop thoughts on their own, modelled from the information and discussions

available.

The second and perhaps the most important aspect would be the practical application. This is the area where I can be of the greatest help to my assistants. I believe that it is my responsibility to teach the assistants how to teach, how to handle people, and how to conduct themselves as professionals. They must also be versed in all the latest golf shafts, club fitting, profit analysis and budgeting. In my shop in the spring, I ask the sales representatives from my various suppliers to spend a few hours with my staff to explain the selling points of their complete line. I employ a club maker, and make it compulsory that we spend three or four evenings with him in the spring to exchange ideas on club making and repair. Club fitting is always a high point in our discussions and my assistants are all trained to use our lie and loft machine, as well as the shaft deflection board.

In all merchandising, you make your profit when you buy an item, not when you sell it; I try to implant this idea and other aspects of good buying into my assistants' minds, as it is of prime importance today. We visit soft goods distributors, not only in the direct trade, but also general sportswear sales agents, sometimes buying special clearance items which we can use for sale openers in the spring.

I sincerely believe that my actual operation is my ideal training program and I try to involve my staff in every aspect of the operation. I feel very strongly that with the experience of buying goods at the buying shows, and at other wholesalers, training in club fitting and repair, public relations in the shop, participation in golf clinics, plus the other daily activities, that my training program is now in existence; coupled with the extra hours spent on reading and studying, the foundation should be complete. I feel that the most important part from this point on is my interest and encouragement throughout their training.

V.

As the role of the golf professional has changed in the past ten years, so it will change in the next ten years. Traditionally, the golf professional has been a self-employed businessman, receiving a token retainer and free premises in which to do business. This was fine when the golf professional was basically an instructor of the game of golf and a nice guy who played golf with the members. With the introduction of golf cars, clothing, shoes, mass merchandising of clubs and balls, the whole concept of the golf shop has changed, and with it the role of the golf professional.

The other major change has come about as a result of the ever increasing expense of golf course operation, particularly within the club-house. Most clubs are experiencing financial problems and have started looking in other directions; unfortunately for the golf professional, they are looking in his direction, mainly because of his apparent success. The attitude that was once pride in the club golf professional has evolved into one of jealousy because of his profitable operation.

What then is the answer?

In my opinion, the golf professional has been standing still; gone are the days when we can go south and play golf with our friends allwinter. Our economy is such that we

must start educating ourselves in the other aspects of the golf industry, otherwise we will be sitting by watching people trained as bartenders take over the entire operation of the golf club, including the pro shop! We, the golf professionals of this country, should be training ourselves for the future. What individual is more trained in golf than we are? I'm going back to a business school I attended in Tampa, Florida in 1962, where one of the guest speakers, George Albach, made the following comment - "You can make a golf professional a manager in no more than eighteen months, but you never can make a manager a golf professional." We must become trained in the management field and take over the entire operation.

The other way that golf professionals must go in the future is toward golf course ownership or leasing. This opportunity is presently in the forefront as property values are generally depressed; once again, however, effort must be given in the off-season to study turfgrass, as well as management. Both the Managers Associations and the Green-superintendants Association have been passing us by - We must educate ourselves and re-arm for the future.

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