

## Solving Caddie Problems

Does your Club face a problem in obtaining caddies?

If it does, it is not alone, but experience has developed several devices which have been effective at other clubs.

A Racine, Wis., club sends its professional to call personally at all neighboring junior high and high schools each winter to point out the advantages of caddying at that club. Some clubs make similar contacts with Boy Scout organizations.

A Minneapolis, Minn., club makes an arrangement with a downtown organization handling underprivileged youngsters whereby a club bus picks up a group of these boys each morning and returns them at the end of the day.

A Buffalo, N. Y., club advertises through newspapers and by radio for caddies.

A Huntington, W. Va., club presents free golf clinics at the local YMCA during the winter, promoting not only interest in golf but also in caddying.

One club gives a \$5 bonus to each caddie who recruits a permanent fellow-worker. Another gives points under its bonus system, which also rewards regularity of attendance and efficiency.

Many clubs open their golf seasons with an attractive caddie dinner, to which the regular caddies invite caddie prospects.

### On the Club Level

These tested suggestions are examples of manner in which the Western Golf Association attacks one aspect of the caddie problem, to which it devotes itself in behalf of its member clubs. They are extracted from its booklet, "Recruiting and Retaining Your Caddies." This booklet, in turn, is one of several means which the WGA employs in attempting to achieve its primary goals:

To enhance the enjoyment of golf through better caddies and to make caddying an honored and respected avocation for young men.

WGA operates on the premise that "good caddies are indispensable to good golf."

Its publicized Evans Scholars Foundation, which has provided college scholarships for more than 250 caddies since 1930, and its honored Western Amateur, Open and Junior Championships are means to these ends, but they tend to obscure the worth-while work the WGA does on the Association-to-Member Club-and-Player level.

Many clubs could profit by peeking over WGA's shoulder at this phase of its activity.

As WGA has delved into the caddie problem, it has developed a set of principles designed to guide clubs in all their relationships with caddies. This program has been formulated in another booklet, "Caddie Committee Manual," which is the bible on the management of caddies and the testament to years of thought and experience.

In order to institute a sound caddie program, WGA advises, a club must place the responsibility on a committee which has time and the facilities to discharge that responsibility.

"An examination of published club by-laws reveals that frequently the responsibilities for caddies are included in the work of other committees, i.e., the golf, sports and pastimes, grounds and green committees," WGA finds.

Recommended duties and responsibilities of the Caddie Committee include:

Selection and supervision of the Caddie Master.

Initiation, supervision and direction of the recruitment program.

Supervision and direction of the training of new caddies and refresher training for old caddies.

Formulation and supervision of the necessary caddie attendance and performance records.

Organization and recommendation to the Board of a plan for caddie compensation and establishment of a uniform system of caddie rating.

Formulation and recommendation to the Board of necessary caddie rules and regulations. This should include enforcement of these rules, following their approval by the Board.

Provision of adequate facilities for caddies when not in service. Facilities should include clean and adequate toilets and washrooms.

Establishment of incentives for faithful and efficient service by the boys.

Provision of adequate eating facilities for caddies on club premises.

Confirmation with club legal counsel in regard to state and local laws governing employment of minors. The club insurance program must provide sufficient protection for the club and members in the event of caddie accidents on the grounds.

Provision for physical examination of caddies to verify the boys as physically qualified for their strenuous duties.

Obtainment of transportation for caddies when necessary.

Provision of system for checking with school authorities on boys reporting for work while school is in session.

Preparation of caddie application for employment.

### **Recommendations Implemented**

As might be expected, the WGA has implemented each of these recommendations with detailed suggestions.

Those concerning incentives, rather than tips, for faithful and efficient service are examples of particular interest. "Tipping," WGA says, "is the quickest means to demoralize your caddie service. Boys are quick to learn the good and poor tippers, and they are sure to seek assignment to the most generous members. If caddie rates are fairly established and incentives to good work are adequate, tipping is not necessary . . . Whenever possible, it is advisable that the boys be paid by the caddie master, and not by the members. The ticket system is the answer to eliminating tipping. Another advantage of the caddie master paying the caddie is

that the former can discuss the member's rating and criticism of the boy right at the moment while it is freshest in the minds of both. In that way, the boy's weaknesses are quickly cured."

Instead of tips, WGA recommends an incentive plan comparable to those operated in many businesses, and financed by the club. Some suggested incentives are:

Privilege of playing golf and/or use of the swimming pool on stated days and times.

Participation in a cash bonus system.

Privilege of participating in club caddie tournaments.

Privilege of representing the club as a caddie in golf and other athletic competitions.

The recommendations regarding caddie house and yard are equally pertinent. WGA believes, and most golfers will agree, that these facilities reflect the type of caddie service the members receive. Disreputable and defaced property indicate lack of respect and lack of supervision. On the other hand a clean and properly supervised area can attract desirable types of boys to the club.

"If gambling, smoking, rough-housing and foul language are tolerated," WGA says, "either the wrong type of boy is being employed or those in charge are falling down on their jobs. In either case, get rid of the weakness.

"In spite of the caddie shortage, never hesitate to dismiss a caddie for a rule infraction which has been explained and which the other boys respect. Parents and school teachers never will encourage or allow boys to caddie if the caddie house and yard has an unsavory reputation."

The WGA stresses the importance of an attractive caddie yard in still another booklet, "A Camera Tour of Caddievill, U. S. A.," which points up by photographs a large number of devices which are being used by some clubs to improve conditions for their caddies.

It would be a disservice to WGA to indicate that this sampling reveals more than a fraction of its work and purpose, but there is food for thought and material for betterment even in these samples.