

John Molenda—club pro

By GAYLE JACOBSON

For the club professional, the nine months of golf they work and play through are long and tough. Although they are not on tour, such as your Arnold Palmers and Lee Trevinos, they're working just as hard, if not harder.

Club pros such as John Molenda of Knollwood Country Club in West Bloomfield is a perfect example of the other side of golf many people don't know too much about.

"GOLF," MOLENDA stated, "is a game of endurance." He should know. Two weeks ago the 36 year old pro won a purse of \$2,000 by firing a five-under-par 65 to take first place in the Royal Oak Golf Classic. He had another big win a couple of months prior to this down at Red Run Golf Club when he took home the \$3,000 first prize in the Chevy Dealers Tournament.

Being a club professional means that Molenda must service the membership of his country club. He works at the club for approximately nine months, 6 days a week, 12 hours a day. When he's not managing the pro shop, giving golf instruction, and directing tournaments, Molenda's off playing in tournaments throughout the state trying to subsidize his income.

Molenda has been a club pro since 1969. Five years ago he was a touring professional, but that period in his 10 year career as a pro golfer was brief, having been cut short by a wrist injury. He had spent two winless years, 1967 and 1968 on tour.

A pro since 1965, Molenda began golfing when he was 15. In high school he played baseball, football and basketball as well as golf. By the time he entered college he was ready to chuck the other sports and stay strictly with golf, finding it more of a challenge to himself as an individual.

AFTER COLLEGE Molenda was drafted and spent a couple of years playing golf and building courses in Korea for the government. He turned pro almost immediately after leaving the service.

Molenda has been the head pro at Knollwood 4 years now. He says that club working "has it's pressure" as does the tours, but it's a different type of pressure Molenda feels. For the touring player, he said the pressure is not necessarily the money involved but, "How you play is what's the most important. If you're not swinging right you're going to have a lot of pressure."

Interest in golf has picked up a great deal over the years and Molenda feels this is due to the ways in which the sport has been prom-

oted. Golf has become as familiar with television coverage as has football and baseball, and more people are turning to golf tournaments as fund-raisers for charity than ever before. Along with this golf boom, the winnings grow. Each year finds a hike in prize monies. The credit is placed mainly on Arnold Palmer. The purses began to grow in order to lure Palmer to the tournaments, and they haven't stopped.

Turning professional in 1974 is nothing like it was 20 years ago. In order to join the PGA a golfer must spend four or five years in apprenticeship. During this time the player must enter business

school, attend seminars and go through quite a rigorous testing system. In turn, he must belong to the Professional Golf Association of America.

WITH WINTER coming on fast, Molenda's work at the country club is almost over for another season. He plays his final tournament of the summer in Pinehearst, at the end of October. The Club Professionals Tournament holds a purse of \$110,000. First place in the tourney, nets the winner \$18,000. Last year Molenda flew south for the winter to play golf, \$6,600 richer because of that tournament.



John Molenda examines a new set of clubs in the Knollwood clubhouse. (Photographed by Douglas Bauman)

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Newcomers hold awards luncheon

The Paradiso Villa in Troy was the scene of the semi-annual meeting of the Newcomers Ladies Golf League Sept. 18. Trophies and silver service dishes were presented at the awards luncheon.

In First Flight, top honors went to Betty Wood, with Lee Bannister and Pat Gerwert sharing the runner-up spot. Second Flight was taken by Judi Pearce, edging Terry Ross. Third Flight was awarded in absentia to Mazel Lee, with second place going to Nancy Reynolds.

The club presented an award for the most improved golfer to Martha Ross. Silver butter dishes were given to Mary Gauthier for ringer score and to Judy Pratt, Julia Frame and Delores Stout for ringer putts.

Outgoing president, Barbara Kirk presided over the affair at which next years officers were installed. They are: Pat Broom, president; Marjorie Johnston, vice-president; Julie Frame, treasurer; and Evelyn Rosebrock, secretary.

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