BY VERN PUTNEY

Fuzzy Zoeller was out of bounds in doing an ad in the April issue of Golf Illustrated that said, "Make a stop at K mart before you head for the golf course."

That declaration triggered a resentful stance by most golf professionals — many of whom are superintendents — around the nation. And, according to Will C. Mann, owner-director of golf at Quarry Hills Country Club in Graham, N.C., many amateurs to whom the ad was beamed are equally upset at what they feel is Zoeller's insensitivity to his fellow PGA members.

"Such a keen and seeming endorsement of a discount department store at the direct expense of the pro, most of whom derive a major source of their income through shop sales, is surprising and disappointing," declared Mann.

Mann, vice president of the Carolinas PGA, is aware that Zoeller, ironically the son of a pro, has contributed much to golf. "Fuzzy is comfortable with the K mart association. K mart introduces new people to the game, particularly in the blue-collar areas and young people. These new converts are less talkers and practitioners. They bring their friends to a golf course to have fun and spend money. Eventually they will upgrade their equipment purchases at the local PGA professional's shops.

"We have difficulty viewing K mart as direct competition to the PGA professional." Mann isn't mollified. He fired back. "If Fuzzy is sensitive to our needs, and if he desires to be supportive, I suggest that in the future he, or whoever approves his ads, check the wording more carefully to be sure that his ads may affect his fellow golf professionals.

"Please assure Fuzzy that I regret this rather unpleasant incident as much as I am sure he does. Hopefully, we can all learn from the experience and get on with our respective roles in the game we all love."

Mann serves on three PGA of America national committees: Membership Eligibility, Policy and Procedures; Ethics and Constitutional Review; and Club Relations.

**Game's traditions**

Mann mirrors long-held game tradition. From the establishment of the game in America in 1747 to about a century ago, it was accepted that club members "patronize their pro."

There has been a wide swing away from this practice in the last 30 years as sporting goods companies and other sales professionals vigorously for the golf dollar. Many entering the game in the post-war era were unaware of that custom, and many of them bought elsewhere because of lower prices.

Mass merchandising and slick promotion have taken a heavy toll on shop sales and pro income, and gone is the enthusiastic pro shop reception that once awaited golf equipment sales representatives. The sales reps have almost vanished. There is little personal touch. Orders are taken at sectional golf shows, and re-ordering is usually handled by mail.

**Court decision**

The drain on shop sales may have been somewhat stemmed by a recent court decision reserving the right of manufacturers to restrict golf equipment sales to discount stores.

Joseph (Hop) Mala, a PGA member for 55 years who has followed the golf trail from Maine and Massachusetts to Florida for all those summers and winters, recalls club policy at his last pro post.

At Spring Valley Country Club in Sharon, Mass., where Mala held popular sway from 1960 to 1985, it was "deal with Hop exclusively."

A Spring Valley member who owned several discount golf houses was warned, "It's OK to play here, but don't solicit business. This is Hop's turf."

"That theme, akin to 'Buy America First' philosophy, held true in only slightly lesser degree at Portland (Maine) Country Club during Mala's 30-year tenure."

Mala may have been the pioneer in the tour practice of exposing product names to TV cameras, he told Nat Cooper, known as the Amana King of New York State and New Jersey, frequently played with Mala at Woodlands Country Club in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. During a 1967 round, Cooper asked Mala how Cooper could advance further his product image.

"Put your name on golf hats, and you have your army of employees wear them while playing," suggested Mala.

**Getting into the act**

Now, a Greg Norman hawked on the front of his shirt (worth a cool million) the Reebok running shoe label. Embazoned on the shirt's arm is the golden arches of McDonald's. That can buy the hungry "Shark" a whale of a lot of hamburgers.

Caddies also get into the act. Cape Cod's a message, however, subliminal, and an extra $100 can be pocketed.

The latest dip into the golf pocket once reserved for pros comes at, of all places, a Colorado airport.

Denver's Stapleton International has built an indoor golf driving range. "Tee Off & Take Off" is located in a new mini-mall, and includes video "swing analysis" machines.

The store is equipped with a hole-in-one putting area and a video camera system that records the golfer's swing and transfers the images in slow motion to a VHS tape that the "swinger" can take home.

"But," echoing Mann, "who's going to break down the swing, analyze and correct the flaws? The subject certainly isn't equipped. Perhaps he can invite over a few well-meaning friends.

If your shot, Fuzzy, how about a great recovery from deep rough?"

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