Corcoran Sells Committee on Right Plan for Shop

Lo, the poor pro when his dreams of a new shop run head-on into the tastes, preferences and foibles of club building committees. The management hired him for his knowledge of the game and the business of golf; the membership pays his salary; but when the all-important matter of shop location and layout in a new building is considered these same good people often give a cold shoulder to the pro’s ideas. Consciously, or unconsciously, the professional is abruptly made to be a football between the forces of those interested in club social events and those interested in golf. The only recourse left to the pro is to use his head, his personality and his prayers in the hope that a combination of these will win over his numerous bosses.

George Corcoran, pro at Greensboro CC of Greensboro, N.C., took these humps in stride and his combination worked out. Today he is established in what he considers is one of the finest shop layouts in the country. Of the three elements in the combination George says it must have been prayer, lots of it. The evidence points, however, to extensive and successful use of the other two.

It can be told now. Now that everybody is happy and the new shop is an admired part of the new wing of the clubhouse. And there was the first rub! Some committee members wanted the shop to be separate from the clubhouse, just off the 1st tee. The idea was to divorce the golf headquarters from the club proper and in so doing place idle caddies at a distance.

Shop in Clubhouse Helps Sales

The theory of remote caddie facilities had no opposition, but with quiet insistence Corcoran talked with the committee individually and collectively regarding the removal of the shop. In his opinion this action would cut down as much as 20% of his sales potential. Since his income is dependent in the main on his shop sales this was a fair and reasonable objection. As an alternative he suggested that a caddie house be built adjacent to the first tee, design to conform with clubhouse architecture, and that the shop be redesigned and kept in its original location. That location being on the ground floor just back of the first tee by some 40 feet. Maybe prayer did do it, but the button-holing of members with a definite plan and a reasoning attitude played a big part. The shop was not moved. The caddie house was built detached. And George’s fear of a 20% sales loss went out the window.

Along with removal of the shop came the idea of placing the women’s locker room on the east side of the building and the men’s locker room on the west; a cocktail lounge to be placed where the old shop had been. This would have meant that the only real contact between golfers and point-of-sale merchandising would have been the few moments spent in signing up for a round and in posting scores afterwards. The successful campaign of this working pro terminated with a set-up that seems now to suit the members just as much as it does him. The women’s locker room is entered either from the shop (on the north side) or from outside coming in from the 18th green. The men’s locker room is entered from the shop (east side) or from the 18th green pathway. Net result, traffic is continuous through the shop from lockers to first tee and from parking areas to lockers. The volume of traffic is a prime factor in the establishing of the urge to buy golf equipment and accessories. In the new shop George has certainly got the traffic.

Some members of the building committee kept pointing to the lack of space in the clubhouse shop for adequate club storage in a spacious rack system that was desired. As an alternative, the use of a section of the adjacent boiler room was proposed by the pro. It was found that the simple procedure of cutting through an existing wall for entryway would provide ample space for the system. That closed the deal in that direction. Racks for clean, orderly storage of 250 bags were set up with the only cost being that of painting the rackroom walls and cutting in a doorway; that door opening off the south side of the shop.

Gets Himself An Office

Based on his years of shop operation experience Corcoran requested that he be allowed to set aside a portion of his shop for office space.

“What use has a pro for an office?”, was the explosive query.

It was pointed out that the days of a golf professional spending his time almost

Two views of Corcoran’s new shop showing primary counter, table and display cases.
entirely on the course with members was
a thing of the past from an economic
standpoint. Also, the assignment of duties
and responsibilities other than teaching
golf and supervising course maintenance
had brought on the need for a filing sys-
tem, other records, and a private place for
the numerous conferences with various
committees looking to the pro for getting
things done. In this instance the pro in
question was in charge of the shop, the
caddies, instruction of golfers of all ages,
course maintenance and improvement,
swimming pool, tennis court and grounds
maintenance. The committee saw the
light. George got his small office.

In that office today are convened meet-
ings of the tournament committees in
charge of golf, tennis and swimming.
Records of handicaps, tournaments, plant
operations and requirements are in order
for prompt reference. On the commercial
side the many golf equipment salesmen
who come by are able to sit down and
have a businesslike, uninterrupted chat
with the pro, whereas before they had to
catch him standing up against the counter
or on the run. It is needless to say that
this innovation also has proven a popu-
lar one.

The office is on the north side of the
shop and the primary counter is on the
south. Midway between the two is a
walnut table on which are displayed caps,
gloves, socks and sweaters. Behind the
counter is a ceiling-high walnut cabinet
containing various brands of golf balls.
On either side of the door opening onto
the first tee are floor racks of "impulse
club" buys, such as different putter styles,
sand wedges, approach irons, etc. Across
the room on the right side of the men's
locker room door is a ceiling high display
case of some 16 sets of matched irons
and woods in a double row. On the left is
a graduated display rack for golf shoes.
This section is used during tournaments
to display the trophies to be awarded. The
floor is rubber tile with heavy rubber rub-
ner in the traffic lanes to prevent spike
damage.

This shop is one of the best we have
ever seen. There may be some that cost
more, but there are none that are better
designed for the function intended nor has
better taste in functional furnishings been
observed.

It is an example of a pro's dream come
ture. Credit should go not only to George
Corcoran for his selling job to the build-
ing committee, but also to the members
of the committee for having the wisdom
to follow the recommendations of a man
who knew his business and whose success
at that business was really their success
too.

And about that prayer business; a lot of
pros across the country are going to want
George Corcoran to tell them which saint
he addressed and what words he used!

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N.Y.-Conn. Turf Meet
Answers Questions

Dr. John Cornman and Gene Nutter of
Cornell and Dr. John Schread of Yale were
headlined experts on program of the New
York-Connecticut Turf Improvement Assn.
meeting held at the fine Tamarack CC,
Greenwich, Conn. Joseph Lockhart, M.
Kent and Bob McGregor were hosts to the
65 attending. Tony Mascara showed
colored films of a new mole drain and of
a complete course renovating job, as an-
other feature of the excellent program ar-
ranged by Pres. A. R. Twomly and Sec.
A. Maslin. A lively discussion on annual
bluegrass was led by M. Strazza of the
Round Hill Club. Among those comparing
notes on the problem were Doug Rankin,
J. Butler, D. Artese, J. Vigliotte, H. Le-
Furgy and J. Flynn. None considered he
had the right answer but considered they
got constructive help from the annual
bluegrass experiences.

Wm. Bengfield, Asst. County Agricul-
tural Agent, as usual, helped greatly in
publicizing the meeting.

The N.Y.-Conn. organization is actively
supporting the Turf Conference planned
for Oct. 30-31 at White Plains, N.Y.; the
first meeting of its kind in the area.

Next meeting of the association will be
an all-day picnic and meeting at James
Baird State Park.