

# 1974 PGA MERCHANDISE SHOW:

ENERGY CRISIS?  
NEW SITE?  
THE BUYERS  
HARDLY NOTICED.



PORT ST. LUCIE, FLA.—Exhibitors at the 1974 Professional Golfers' Assn. Merchandise Show faced 9 a.m., January 26, with considerable trepidation. Soon they would get the answer to the question that had been uppermost in the minds of golf manufacturers and distributors for months: How would the new site and the energy crisis affect attendance at the show?

It soon became apparent, however, that there had been little need for concern. Although total attendance was about 15 per cent under the 1973 tally, Wally Phillips, newly-elected president of the Golf Manufacturers & Distributors Assn., noted that this year's group "really came to buy." Phillips reported that the 1974 show established a new record in total sales for the four-day run.

Part of the reason for the reduction in total attendance was attributable to tighter limits on the number of exhibitor badges allocated to each booth (five per booth) and the elimination of exhibitor guest badges. This policy cut down on the number of "sightseers" and the amount of congestion in the tents.

One lesson learned from the experience of the 1974 show is that judgments of success or failure must be primarily based on the quality rather than the quantity of attendees. Hordes of people roaming through the aisles do not necessarily mean a successful show. The real moment of truth occurs when the order sheets are tallied at the close of the show; this point was vividly "brought home" to exhibitors at the 1974 show.

One major manufacturer reported sales of one-half million dollars compared to his previous record of \$300,000, attained at last year's show, according to a statement from the PGA. Wally Phillips, speaking as vice president of Charles A. Eaton Company, noted that his firm registered a 25 per cent sales increase at this year's show over 1973's event.

The energy crisis also seemed to have a positive effect on the quality of attendance; it tended to sift out the "socializers" from the buyers.

Further evidence of exhibitor pleasure with the event was the amicable tone of the annual meeting of the Golf

Manufacturers & Distributors Assn., held at the close of business on the second day. Few complaints about the show were voiced, and members unanimously favored the new entrance arrangement to the tents. A small entrance tent was set up between the two large exhibition tents, thus no impression of a primary and secondary tent was evident, as in past years. Traffic flowed freely and equally in both.

In other business involving the show, GMDA members voted to ban any social functions during show hours. This move came as a result of a party given at mid-day by one manufacturer. Although this particular event did not have any noticeable effect on attendance during the show, members felt that if show-hour parties became more of a practice, attendance at future shows might suffer.

Several members severely criticized the proliferation of regional and sectional merchandise shows throughout the country. One irate member pointed out that the expense of exhibiting at these small shows was becoming prohibitive and that the tactics being utilized to persuade manufacturers to participate, in some cases, were "subtle forms of blackmail." Members asked that the GMDA officers give this matter top priority in a meeting with the national officers of the PGA.

In the association election of officers, Wally Phillips, Charles A. Eaton Company, was elected president; Charles Van Dyne, H. D. Lee Company, first vice president; James Hansberger, Ram Golf Corp., second vice president; Bob Hornung, Hornung's Pro Golf Sales, secretary-treasurer.

Former president, Robert Rickey, was named by unanimous vote "honorary president for life." At the same time, Rickey announced that he would be retiring from his position as vice president of MacGregor on June 1, this year. In noting his future plans after that date, Rickey said he would continue his affiliation with the National Golf Foundation, and also would be in a sense returning to an earlier career in journalism through an association after June 1 with GOLF and GOLFDOM Magazines.

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