

# BOB RICKEY

INSIDE THE INDUSTRY

Golf's insiders have watched with unusual empathy the traumatic experiences that several golf ball manufacturers have undergone in the past year or so. Except for tee-off and the final putt on the 18th green, both likely checkpoints, these companies' well-known, well-publicized staffs of professional golfers have refused to use their respective company's product. Two of the companies, both major brand names, have told their wayward players to use their golf balls at all times. Their demand for compliance is based on the old-fashioned rule that says, if one is paid by a company, one owes that company loyalty, including using and endorsing that company's products exclusively.

In both cases, the companies have been patiently trying to convince the holdouts that their respective balls perform as well as any. One even modified the construction of its ball to meet the player's demands and conducted testing sessions, pitting their product against the competition's and proving both equal. Neither action could dent the player's armor of belief that determines confidence in equipment. Such an impasse usually leads to the ultimatum, "Play it or else."

In an industry as competitive as golf, you normally do not feel sympathy for a competitor with problems; rather, you try to take advantage of the situation to increase your share of the market. The only exception is that I have shared the experience and I will never forget it, although the perspective of many years has dulled its edge.

MacGregor's Tourney golf ball, prior to World War II, had been made for them by the Worthington Ball Company. The product was a fine one and was very acceptable to the MacGregor professional staff, which included Ben Hogan, Byron Nelson and Jimmy Demaret, who completely dominated tournament golf at that time.

Forseeing the post war sales explosion in golf, MacGregor's management decided the company would be missing a major opportunity if it did not make its own golf ball. So, a ball manufacturing plant was established. After several trying years of learning how to make this strange new product, during which time the company looked the other way if the staff used competing balls, MacGregor felt it had a product the staff could use with confidence. The staff was encouraged to use the ball exclusively. As time went on, they all complied, with one exception: Ben Hogan, who at that time was the finest player in golf.

After repeated appeals had failed, it was decided to ask Hogan to stop by the Cincinnati headquarters for several days to participate in a series of tests which management felt certain would convince him that the Tourney was equal to or better than all others. Ben agreed to stop enroute to the U.S. Open.

Every known test was performed both in the laboratory and in actual play. The final and most dramatic test was having Hogan witness an automatic driving machine that hit every make of ball hundreds of times, proving that the MacGregor ball would go as far and perform as consistently as any other ball when hit by a machine.

The president of MacGregor held a several-hour session to review in detail all of the tests Hogan had seen, ending the marathon pitch with the results of the driving machine test. Finally, he asked Hogan, who throughout the three days had hardly uttered more than a grunt, for his opinion. "I think," said Hogan, "you ought to enter the machine in the U.S. Open next week."

The sequel to the story was that a short time later, Hogan, with the help of a handful of Texas millionaires, founded his own company.

Because the incident happened a

*continued on page 54*

**NOW! FIX FLATS FAST**



**NEW  
SURE SEAL  
TIRE REPAIR KIT**

- Seals any puncture in less than 2 minutes without removing tire from wheel
- Will not damage tire
- Costs less than 14¢ per repair

**144 REPAIRS-\$18.95 PP**  
*Money back guarantee*

**Heath-Gates**  
TIRE REPAIR PRODUCT  
DIVISION

2121 Johnson Drive, Dept. G11  
Shawnee Mission, Ks 66205

Circle No. 165 on Reader Service Card

**IF . . .**

**YOU OWN OR  
OPERATE A:**

*Pro Shop  
Golf Course  
Driving Range  
Par-3 Course  
Miniature Course*

**. . . SEND NOW,  
FOR OUR**

**New 1974 64-page  
Wholesalers Catalog  
of Golf Supplies**

Balls, clubs, club repair supplies, tees, mats, pails, markers, retrievers, golf bags, obstacles, ball washers, ball pickers, electric bug killers, ball striping & painting, supplies, grips, nets, shoes & accessories, umbrellas . . . and more!

 **Eastern  
GOLF COMPANY inc.**  
2537 Boston Road (Route 71)  
Bronx, N.Y. 10467

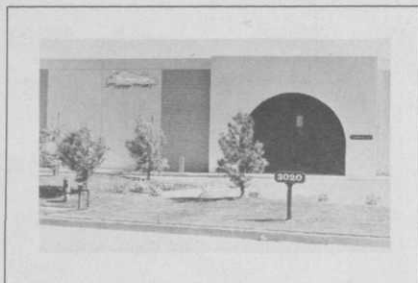
Circle No. 142 on Reader Service Card

Company's Special Vehicle Div. has introduced a "prestige" golf car, which may be used by clubs as a VIP vehicle. Called El Presidente in honor of Lee Trevino, the special electric car features personalized canopy, television set, eight-track stereo tape deck, an AM-FM radio and built in bar.

"El Presidente . . . can also be a revenue-producing factor for any country club," said Jim Munn, general manager of the division. "We see it being used by clubs for visiting dignitaries and on a reserve basis, by members for entertaining their special guests. That's where the revenue-producing part comes in. Clubs can help pay for the El Presidente by the revenue they earn through rental of the El Presidente to members."

The car has the basic design of the Otis golf car, but features strips of chrome to accent the powder blue Cylolac body, giving the car a racy look. In addition, the car has a welded tubular steel frame, four-wheel stability, automotive type steering, battery power for more than 54 holes of golf and its own built-in battery charger, as well as interior deep pile charcoal carpeting.

A prototype of the El Presidente was driven by entertainer Sammy Davis Jr. at the Greater Hartford Open last Labor Day.



### CARBONITE EXPANDS GRAPHITE LINE

EL CAJON, CALIF.—Carbonite Corp. is producing a graphite shaft for irons in addition to its line of no-twist graphite shafts for woods. The new shafts may be fitted for all iron lengths and cover both regular and stiff flexes. Reportedly, the last eight inches of each shaft are not tapered, making it possible to trim the tip end to fit each numbered iron.

"The flex curve of each iron progressively becomes stiffer to match the increasing weight as the irons go higher in number," explained company president Bob Basso. "By trimming the non-tapered tip from shafts that are identical in construction, a uniform feel is achieved for the whole set of irons." Similar to Carbonite's no-twist graphite shafts for woods, the new irons remain square to the line of flight before, during, and after impact, thereby rewarding the golfer with better directional control, according to Basso. "Only pure (aerospace quality) graphite is used in all our shafts, which have a softer feel than conventional steel but, unlike steel, absorb vibration and shock at impact."

Tip diameter of Carbonite's iron shaft is .370 and butt diameter is .600. The dimensions are identical in all shafts.

### TEUTONIX ACQUIRES BALL-O-MATIC

SOUTH BEND, IND.—Teutonix, Inc., manufacturer of Bucket Boy range ball dispensing equipment, has acquired the exclusive marketing and manufacturing rights to all Ball-O-Matic products. The terms of the agreement were not disclosed. In making the announcement, Roland L. Eckmayr, president of Teutonix, stated that the company will continue making the Ball-O-Matic products with the same degree of quality as before the takeover.

### WELCOME *from page 10*

As a columnist for GOLFDOM, Rickey actually will be returning to an earlier career. After graduating from Northwestern University's School of Journalism in 1943, he worked for the Chicago Daily News and Dayton Daily News.

Few people in golf can match Rickey's credentials and his contributions to the industry. In addition to his duties on GOLFDOM, Rickey will also be special projects director for our sister publication, GOLF Magazine.

Both magazines are indeed privileged to have Bob Rickey aboard.

### RICKEY *from page 11*

long time ago, I now can chuckle when I recall it. Perhaps you can appreciate now why I have had the unique experience of feeling sympathy for competitors recently.

Unfortunately, I am afraid that this kind of thing will happen again, as long as golf is played competitively and as long as confidence in equipment is so heavily weighed by psychological factors and the intangibles of "feel" and "click." As trying and frustrating as this kind of experience may seem at the time it occurs, it is one of the oddities that makes the golf business so different from other businesses and so much fun to be a part of. □

EDITOR'S NOTE: *With all the self-congratulations expressed on page 10, you, our readers, may have felt slighted at not having been mentioned. Of course, we haven't forgotten; you are the reason for the new column.*

*"Inside the Industry," we think, fits in perfectly with our concept of the golf industry as a whole entity; we do not think each sector within it exists as an autonomous unit—nor do we think it should.*

*We feel now is the time to pull back a few paces and, from this longer perspective, look at the shifting kaleidoscope that is the golf industry.*

*Participate with us in this venture. If something—a thought, a gripe or a compliment—moves you, write to us. We'll see that Bob Rickey gets the message.*

*The address: Bob Rickey, % GOLFDOM Magazine, 380 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.*



### NEW PLANT FOR MOODY

COSTA MESA, CALIF.—Moody Sprinkler Company, Inc., has moved to a new modern plant at 3020 Pullman Street here. The expanded manufacturing facility is geared to step up production of irrigation company's Customline and Rainmaster lines to meet increasing demands from turfmen throughout the country and abroad, according to the company. Warehousing and distribution are now computer controlled for greater service efficiency.