Cleveland Pro Shop Emphasizes
Service, Personal Contact and Experience

“Our Sales Edge—Follow Through”

Mike Limback, PGA professional who runs the pro shop at Tanglewood Country Club, just outside Cleveland, works a three-tier Alpine Chalet that is both picturesque and functional. And at a time when competition is getting tougher, Limback and his assistant, Dennis Toler, are putting both to work in order to come up with a strong program of merchandise mix and merchandising.

“We have a lot of competition from the downtown stores,” Limback said. “Somehow or other they get hold of what is supposed to be only available to us, and then they sell this merchandise at ridiculously low prices. We’ve got to do something different to keep the traffic here.”

Limback and Toler follow through on what might be called tender-loving-care merchandising. “Few people realize,” Toler adds, “what follow through really means. A lot of customers have in mind only one section of the perfect set. They don’t know how to go about getting it.”

Offering him further support is the three-tier chalet that functionally divides the area into specific sections. The pro shop itself is only one section of the chalet. As the member enters, he can go downstairs which is devoted to storage and the cart repair area. Toler said the area can store 480 bags easily.

If the member walks up a flight of six stairs, he comes into the 20’ x 30’ pro shop on the right hand side. On the left, flowing from the shop, is a 20’ x 30’ canteen area with tables and chairs, a fountain and counter section. This structure is different from many other clubs in that the formal dining area and bar is kept separate from the golf course and the pro shop. The canteen, however, allows for a rest and refreshment on an informal basis.

Storage, inventory and equipment is kept on the third tier that is under the A-frame of the building. Limback believes in a full-shelf approach to merchandising and wide mix as well. Using women’s clothing as an example, he begins with women’s skirts. Tanglewood goes mostly with Haymaker which has been their big seller over the years. In addition, the shop carries Quantum and Harburt. Price range for skirts runs from $20 to $28, while tops go from $9.50 to $18.00. Menswear leads off with Munsingwear in the $8 to $12 shirt and Izod in the $15 to $17.50 range. In addition, Tanglewood has the Kimberton cotton lisle shirt which carries the club’s crest on it.

When it comes to clubs, Limback tries to get one set of everything at the beginning of the season “...so that the members can get a good look at what’s new on the market”. Limback likes the idea of displaying a complete range in clubs. Both Toler and he are Spaulding representatives.

Display and inventory are an important factor in the merchandising. Limback said, “we put the most expensive shirts up front. Eyecatchers like the flashy IZOs. The idea is that this is the first thing the members see when they come in. Munsingwear is a staple that will sell all the time, especially because of its price range. Therefore, you want to put it where the members can see what you have.”

Inventory in shirts runs medium, large and extra-large. Ordering in dozen lots for each style, Tanglewood carries three each of the medium and extra-large, and six of the large. In their approach, Limback and Toler keep everything out front with little backup stock. This has the great advantage of offering a well-stocked front from which members can choose.

The idea behind this is to give the customer the feeling there is both variety and depth in the shop, and...
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Follow continued from page 24

there is no need to shop elsewhere
The season opens in March, and by
April, Limback has his shelves filled
with both the variety of styles, and
their backup.

When it comes to display
methods, Limback has the problem
that all pro shops suffer from: lack
of space. Therefore, in order to give
the feel of difference to a customer
who comes in more than once a
week, he does a great deal of switching
around of displays. Menswear
and ladies wear are kept separate,
and they are changed every two or
three weeks. Limback avoids the display rule of getting the customer familiar with a “slacks section,” etc. Rather, he wants the member to feel
there is a sense of excitement.

In terms of fixturing, he offers
two suggestions to others who are concerned with similar problems. Because of the Alpine A-frame structure, the shop receives a great deal of
daytime light. Even so, there is a necessity of indoor follow through.
Therefore, he has his traditional
downlight established with a fixture.
But then, in order to highlight merchandise that falls within the range of the downlight, he has a spot or
double spot right next to the downlight fixture. This enables the spot to
pick up anywhere within that lighting sphere in order to emphasize specific displays.

A second method he uses which is
working well is to avoid many floor stands that are traditional for
middle-of-the-shop areas. Instead, he
has chain links hanging from the sloping ceiling sections with a bar spread between them. The links fit
into the Alpine motif, and can be
shortened or lengthened depending
upon the merchandise on display as
to shirts and trousers, or it can be
narrowed or widened depending
upon the need for more or less dis-
play bars. In effect, this gives the
floor area much more mobility, and
much less of a cluttered feeling.

As to promotions, Limback
smiles because there “seems to be
something going all the time.” At the
beginning of the year, Tanglewood has a mandatory sports fund fee of
$15. This money all goes into the pot,
and then the winners of the weekly
Saturday and Sunday morning tour-
naments receive gift certificates that
are redeemable at the pro shop. Part
of the money is also used for the
bigger tournaments such as the
member-guest tournaments, stag
day, derby day, etc. There are at
least five or six major tournaments
held on the course every year, in
addition to the smaller “fun” week-
end ones.

As with other clubs, Tangle-
wood’s repair shop does not do major
repairs, limiting their work to re-
shafting or refinishing a club at max-
umum. Tanglewood does have a policy, however, of loaning clubs
to anyone who has one in for repair.
Most of these clubs are ones which
were taken in for trade-in. Limback
keeps several sets in the repair shop
for these purposes as well as for just
in case someone needs a set on an
emergency basis.

Limback also runs the usual end-
of-season sales. Because of Cleve-
land’s weather, he also has a Christ-
mas promotion during this off-sea-
son. The shop sends out a leaflet
which is four pages. It gives a listing
of Christmas-gift ideas for men,
women, and children.

The folder contains not only the
listings but several photos of mer-
chandise as well. This is mailed right
after Thanksgiving when the shop is
decorated with Christmas trim-
ments.

Tanglewood is also anxious to
“grow a set of golf-playing young-
sters” and Limback runs a junior
clinic which is eight weeks of lessons.
The age limits are eight to 16, and

continued on page 64
and hats, and he believes that other
pro shops could work this category
well.

The shelves to utilize that space as
floor merchandise are placed under
shelves do not come down to the
floor, golf clubs, golf carts, and other
headless mannequin that is display-
hats, Wansa puts one on top of a
$13.25 space. In order to display caps and
GOLF CAR TIRES First line 18 x 8.50-8,
make use of an otherwise "empty"
64 GOLFDOM MAGAZINE SEPT.-OCT./74

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FREE LIMBAK
How does Limback view it all?
“I think it’s a matter of getting to
know your people,” he said. “It’s dif-

cult to set down hard and fast rules.
But I think it’s important that your
customers feel that the pro shop is a
friendly place first of all, and then, of
course, that you have the merchan-
dise. You can’t keep showing the
same thing in the same place. Don’t
forget that we’re competing against
downtown and shopping center
stores that thrive on merchandising
techniques. We’ve got to show the
members that we can go one better.”

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