From the people who brought you the Surlryn-cover golf ball comes a new concept in clubs...

Ram widens the sweetspot!

NEW WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION LETS YOU HIT SOLID SHOTS FROM HEEL TO TOE!

Tests prove that by placing additional weight toward the heel and toe of an iron, rather than concentrating the mass in the center of the head, the "sweetspot" or effective hitting area of an iron can be increased. And that's exactly what Ram has done with its new Golden Ram iron.

The added weight behind the heel and toe gives you better feel, distance and accuracy on shots hit away from center. Also, additional weight has been removed from the hosel providing a greater mass at the sole.

First chance you get, hit a few shots with the Golden Ram and feel the difference.

THE NEW GOLDEN RAM "AT YOUR PRO SHOP"

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PRO SHOP CANVAS:
WHAT'S IN STOCK FOR 1973?

Equipment innovations lead professionals across the nation to predict a boom year in '73. Doubleknits dominate soft good sales; the classic look coming on strong.

WEST

by DON CURLEE

SAN FRANCISCO—Golf professionals in Northern California are investing in investment casting, the current rage in iron manufacturing, and expecting it to build even greater interest in clubs in 1973 and greater sales and profits for them. As one professional says, “Any manufacturer who comes out with a funny looking iron this year can’t miss.”

They also expect to continue riding the wave of buying interest driven by the winds of change in ball manufacture—new dimple shapes and patterns, new covers and new construction.

In soft goods the agreement is not as complete, but generally they are planning to increase their stocks, banking on a trend toward a more classic look in men’s golf attire, continued colorful touches for both men and women and a greater emphasis on color coordination between tops and bottoms of golf outfits.

Although every professional has his favorite line of higher-priced golf shoes, not one failed to mention the popularity of the waterproof shoe and its significance in his merchandising plans for 1973. Because as one says, “They make a heck of a second pair of shoes,” the bone-drys are not considered threats to the sale of traditionally higher-priced footwear.

Only in the area of golf bags do professionals fail to express enthusiasm, although the replacement of stays with a liner by a couple of manufacturers was mentioned as a notable sales point.

The professional at one large private club in San Francisco says that he expects greater sales because of the emphasis on heel-to-toe balance and other features in the parade of irons with the new-old look.

He is particularly impressed with the potential of the soft goods market and is just beginning a golf shop remodeling that will result in 400-square feet of additional space. Part of it will be a separate department for women’s wear, distinguished from the rest of the shop by a step up and its own bright decor.

The women are not the only ones on a pedestal at his club, however, for he will offer street

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CENTRAL

by JOE DOAN

CHICAGO—Professionals here are looking ahead to the 1973 season as potentially the best many have ever experienced, but still they are not doing it with what can be called freewheeling confidence. All the favorable ingredients for a boom year are present—rising consumer spending, a definite upturn in the general economic picture, as of early January a surging stock market, a relaxed and euphoric feeling among members and players—but once flooded out, as so many professionals were in 1972, everything that is said about the outlook for the new year is prefaced with allusions to the weather.

No really radical changes in golfwear styles are in evidence for the new season. Women’s pants suits and culottes will continue as top sellers; it is expected that shorts may make a fairly substantial comeback; matching sweaters and tops, casual evening wear and similar items will sell as well or better than they have in the past. Chicago area professionals, it seems, are either very strong on women’s sportswear or no more
than casual about it. There
apparently is no middle ground.
With very few exceptions, nobody
made any money on women's
soft goods in 1972 and a few pro-
fessionals say they took a bad
beating on it. Generally, profes-
sionals who employ a woman to
specialize in selling to women are
quite enthusiastic about the profit
potential in women's attire. But
a large percentage maintain that
the volume isn't there to justify
hiring a woman to handle this end
of the business.

More than one professional
contends that women's golf attire
is priced too high. Most women will
pay from $15 to $20 for an outfit to
wear while playing, but regardless
of style or label, they won't go
twice this high for playing apparel.
At clubs where there are courts,
tennis is siphoning off golf players,
especially among the younger
women. And, as more than one pro
points out, women haven't yet
forgotten the late recession. They
aren't spending as freely as they did
five years ago. Or, at least, they
weren't in 1972.

On the men's side, doubleknits
continued on page 46

by STEPHEN W. BYERS

NEW YORK—Recent changes in
style and design of golf equip-
ment have Eastern golf club pro-
fessionals looking for
bumper sales in '73.

Even professionals with conserva-
tive memberships voiced great
expectations on such subjects as
investment casting, balls with new
patterns and styles and tough
new Surlyn covers, and the rising
momentum in women's soft
goods sales is not far from the tips
of their tongues.

There are few exceptions to the
general feeling among profes-
sionals that the new investment
casted clubs are better for the
average to high handicap player, and
even professionals who don't
agree are screaming that
they can't keep them in stock.

One professional stressed that the
new heel-to-toe weighted irons
provided him with an incredible sell-
ing lever. He says, "To be able
to show a member how I can tailor
the weight on the clubhead to
offset the effect of his hitting the
ball with the heel or toe of the
club has been a big advantage."

"Selling points have never been
so clear cut for me before,"
was the way another Mid-Atlantic
professional summed up his en-
thusiasm for the new clubs, "but
most of them are going
south. I can't buy enough to really
take advantage of the boom."

Some professionals attribute the
cast head boom to the extensive
manufacturers' advertising, which
has educated the golfer better
than ever before on the significance
of clubhead weight distribution.
One professional quips "They've
almost made the phrase 'the
sweet spot' a household expression."

A professional near Miami
Beach feels the advertising, not only
for golf clubs but for balls, has
made golfers more quality
conscious. He says, "Everybody
seems to be going to the cast head.
Members who used to buy clubs
at three-year intervals now
buy in two, and I sold three new
sets of clubs this year to guys who
just bought new clubs last year."

Many professionals are
predicating their high hopes for
golf ball sales on more than
straight conjecture. They say they
are even having good luck in
continued on page 49
The new challenger

Hogan

These tour players play the Ben Hogan Ball

Ben Hogan
2912 West Postford Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76110
Available only at your golf professional shop.

See AMF Athletic Equipment in Walt Disney Studio's New Movie "The World's Greatest Athlete."
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on the tour!

for one reason...they think it is the best.

An ever-increasing number of fine tournament Golfers are discovering the superior tournament play qualities of my APEX Series Ball.

The APEX Ball gives consistently longer distance because of its high coefficient of restitution. In addition to this superior rebound characteristic, it has tight dispersion patterns and performs virtually identically from shot to shot.

The touring professional's success depends on this kind of reliable performance...

And, you can depend on it too!

Ben Hogan
wear and shoes for men, stocking blazers, sports coats and slacks for the first time.

For both street and course wear he sees men returning to a preference for solid colors, usually in shirts or slacks and sometimes in both. And he expects doubleknits to dominate the market. Because Bermudas and pants are not allowed on the course, most of the women members will be buying culottes, perhaps slightly longer than the past year or two, with bright, but well-coordinated colors setting the pace.

A professional at a large inland public course expects irons to continue their strong sales performance, along with “any of the woods with wide sweet spots.”

In balls he is expecting outstanding golfer interest in the new designs.

He also expects a preference for culottes among his women players, with bright colors, but closer coordination, and slightly longer hems. In men’s wear he feels professionals are suffering from too much emphasis on “fancy tops and bottoms.” Now, he predicts a return to solid colors for at least one half of the outfit.

Although he sees knits taking 90 per cent of the clothing sales, he plans to stock some cottons for the 100-degree plus summers.

At one of Northern California’s resort-type courses, the professional expects the lost-wax casted clubs to attract most of the sales.

In apparel he expects the polyester to continue to rule, with polyester-rayon blends and polyester-wool blends making new appeals. He sees no significant style changes, but a slight reversion to more conservative tastes. In other words, “Men’s clothing will look more like men’s clothing,” he says.

He doesn’t see much change in the order of the leaders in ball sales, but acknowledges the boost resulting from the new patterns, covers and construction.

Waterproof shoes account for 90 per cent of his shoe sales, and he finds little market for either men’s or women’s shoes in the $50 range. Early morning dew and heavy irri-

haven’t begun to diminish in appeal and popularity and will again carry the shop from the soft goods merchandising standpoint. Golfers who tend to be stout appreciate the wider waistband on the slacks. Another firm is bringing out a cotton and rayon slack that has great promise, and for hot, summer wear, the cotton shirt is going to be in great demand.

Generally, professionals don’t foresee that their 1973 sales of men’s wear will be much better than it was in 1972. Rain may have kept a lot of players off the course last year, but it didn’t seriously curtail men’s sales. In many cases, rainwear and umbrellas made up for discrepancies in the sales of slacks and shirts.

The big changes for 1972 are not so much in soft goods as in playing equipment. The latter is what the professionals are talking about. In many cases, their enthusiasm is restrained.

A quote concerning the new clubs from one professional reflects the tenor of many: “The idea of shifting the weight from the heel to the toe or redistributing it along the perimeter of the clubhead undoubtedly is good,” he says. “So is opening up the sweet spot and, as one company is doing, reinforcing the back of the irons with a tungsten disk. We’ve discussed the changes among ourselves and most of us agree that the new clubhead should help the high handicap player. Some companies are also doing something about trying to counter the torque in the shaft. That’s not going to hurt anyone. But we all agree that it still depends on how the player swings the club.”

Continuing, this pro says, “From a sales standpoint, you have to look at it realistically. I sell X number of clubs a year, and for the 12 years I’ve been a head professional, my club sales have run in two-year cycles. I had a good year in 1972 and expect to have another in ’73. When new club styles come out, some of my members switch brands because they want to try the new. There’s no doubt they have been influenced by the advertising or what they’ve heard from oth-

determining which brands will be the biggest sellers in ’73 by sending out advanced preference request cards to be filled out by members who want personalized balls.

A majority of professionals interviewed indicated strong member preference for the new balls with the seemingly indestructible Surlyn cover. This is not to say there were no differences of opinion among pros about which ball is superior. One swears by the wound centers, another is partial to solid centers, as long as there is still enough compression to get the ball airborne quickly—and so it goes, but about one point there is unanimity: Members are not as bargain conscious in buying balls as last year. Quality is a must and cheap balls that smile after 18 holes are out. This trend, say several professionals, should carry even more weight in ’73 because of heavy consumer advertising.

Culottes and doubleknits are still the big noise in the soft goods department, with little style changes evidenced, other than an ever-so-slightly lower hemline.

Colors remain relentlessly bright, manifold and daring, with color coordinated prints and checks, with red, white and blue as the preference leaders.

One professional says he has noticed a trend toward a general active sportswear look as opposed to a strict golf look. This had been exploited in the Long Island area with great success. Several astute professionals expanded their women’s soft goods inventory by 50 per cent, stocking many non-golfing items, and sold store merchandise at discount prices to members. Others noticed that women were buying, in the pro shop, clothes they wear on the tennis court, such as freedom giving culottes, and were shying away from the more restrictive pants, both on the tennis court and golf course.

Another professional found he was swamped with member requests for the tic-tac-toe embroidered shirts and pants in polyester and cotton lye.

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TURF MATERIALS: ARE YOU BUYING

A review of the United States Weather Bureau records reveals that most of the cool humid and warm humid climatic regions of the United States experienced precipitation levels well above the long term averages. The large scale flooding and localized standing water in depressional areas during 1972 are now history, but a number of hidden problems remain to be faced. The excessive wet soil conditions have created a number of problems that golf course officials and superintendents must take into consideration in planning their 1973 maintenance program.

SOIL COMPACTION
Excessively wet soil conditions during 1972 have most probably resulted in greater soil compaction under turfs than would normally be experienced during a growing season. Wet soils approaching field capacity are more prone to compaction than drier soils. Also, clay soils are more prone to compaction than coarser textured soils, such as sands. This means that deep soil cultivation, in the form of coring or slicing, will have to be increased during 1973. Preferably this should be accomplished during spring. Also, the golf course maintenance budget should be adjusted upward to cover the added costs of these cultivation operations. Greater problems can be anticipated in maintaining adequate turfgrass quality and density during the 1973 midsummer stress period, if the increased soil compaction is not corrected.

WINTER DISEASES
Wet soil conditions entering the winter dormancy period usually favor increased disease development on turfs. Spring dead spot on bermudagrasses turfs is frequently a greater problem under wet soil conditions.

The two snow mold diseases, Typhula blight and Fusarium patch, are also enhanced by wet soil conditions during winter periods when the soil is not frozen. This increased winter disease activity means that snow mold fungicide application rates, which would normally be effective under drier conditions, may fail to give adequate control. Thus, golf courses that attempted to economize by using marginally low fungicide rates may suffer above-normal damage from snow mold diseases.

LOW TEMPERATURE KILL
Winter injury caused by direct low temperature kill may be greater during the 1972-1973 winter. The bermudagrasses and annual bluegrass are particularly prone to this type of kill. Standing water at the soil surface, which increases the water content in the turfgrass tissues, particularly the crowns, will greatly increase the proneness to direct low temperature kill. If the wet soil conditions persist throughout the winter period, and the proper combination of low temperatures and frequent freezing and thawing occur, a significant increase in golf course turf damage caused by low temperature kill can be expected.

Not much can be done at this time to minimize this problem. Golf courses that have invested in improving their drainage systems, in the form of proper surface contours and the installation of the drains, French drains and catch basins, will most probably have less winter injury problems should winter low temperature kill occur.

RESTRICTED ROOTING
The excessively wet conditions during the 1972 growing season resulted in many golf course turfs entering the winter dormancy period with a drastically reduced root system. This means that the over-all health and vigor of the turf is below the desired standard. If the winter season has been characterized by a lack of snow cover plus increased atmospheric desiccation and soil drought, the turf will also be more prone to injury from winter desiccation. Golf course personnel should be alert to this possibility and should initiate procedures to minimize the degree of winter moisture stress should this condition develop.

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