

To Out-Sell the Local Stores, Loud-Pedal Your Name!

*Some Sound Advice to the Pro Who Is Fighting
Department Store Cut Prices*

A ROSE by any other name may be as sweet to a poet, but Ivory soap, Wrigley gum, Tiffany jewelry, Rolls-Royce automobiles and a multitude of other products would not be as "sweet" to their stockholders, by many millions of dollars, were the names of these products changed. Wonder if the average pro ever thinks of this in considering the value of his own name in making golf merchandise more desirable to the prospective buyer?

There is plenty of evidence supplied by the manufacturers that a professional golfer's name is worth money. Walter Hagen, Gene Sarazen, Bob MacDonal, Jock Hutchison and a host of other star performers can look over their royalties and see how it has paid to have their names capitalized. So much for the star sharpshooter, but how about the average pro who keeps a good shop, attends to the requirements of his members, wins a local or sectional tournament now and then and occasionally qualifies for one of the national events?

He may think there's nothing in his name for him, but if he capitalizes his name either in his bench-made goods or in the superiority of his selection of factory-made stock or, in both cases, in the "fitting" of the proper club to the buyer, he will see quickly one of his greatest defenses against department store competition. In the case of the bench-made goods, the job is not difficult if the man is on the job. Around the Chicago district the Herd and Herd clubs command a premium. In the St. Louis territory the Harrison brothers' name is a sterling mark, and around Duluth, as GOLFDOM recently related, Dick Clarkson's own clubs sell with a speed and at a price that very brightly shows the value of a pro capitalizing his name.

Weighing the Values

Undoubtedly the psychology of golf plays a part in the value any club has to its player. What confidence that the club is right can be had by an average player when the club bears the stamp of "The Leader Store" or some such general mer-

cantile establishment with sales covering almost everything from antiseptic solutions to zithers? Practically none, because the player has the idea that the department store is the jack-of-all-merchandise and master of none.

The average golf player always is looking for an alibi and it takes very little comment to show him that he has a pretty substantial excuse for misplay in the clubs he gets from the sporting-goods section of almost every department store. Some care taken in assuring the customer right off the bat that he has a club satisfactorily and expertly endorsed soon makes itself a feature of pro shop operation that is widely and enthusiastically appreciated by the pro's customers. By his own talk at the time of sale and by reference at every opportunity to this careful selection and fitting of clubs, the pro can make this word-of-mouth advertising active in his behalf.

Since word-of-mouth advertising is about all the advertising the pro ever does he might well guide it so it will carry some weight regarding his leadership as an expert and careful supplier of golf goods.

Study the Sources

The pro can tell of his visits to the various manufacturers' branch offices or factories, and his personal selection of the clubs. He can refer, with good reason, to the leading manufacturers being anxious that the pro get the best of their stocks, for it is the pros who make the golf market and the manufacturers' reputations. It won't hurt to go into plenty of detail when it can be done without boring a buyer who may be in a hurry, for the average player is anxious to get a "peek behind the scenes" in the golf business and will be very active in repeating any "inside" information that the pro can hand out deftly for the good of the pro's business.

It seems to us that many a pro during his off season would do well to visit the plants of some of the leading golf-goods manufacturers and get the "close-up" on the interesting and scientific methods of manufacture that prevail. The selling inspiration and help that the pro will gain

from such visits will be a decided aid to him in merchandising as well as in buying.

During the past summer we heard a successful young pro tell of the methods of one of the well-known Scotch factories making iron heads. The pro had visited this plant during his previous winter's vacation and brought a number of heads home with him. This little talk, made off-hand to a group of three or four members, was passed around in locker-room confabs, embellished and enlarged, for the fellows who recently had been put "in the know" were anxious to show off their wisdom. The next time we visited that club, the pro told us he'd sold the last of the heads he had brought back. The incident was one that vividly showed how a pro could boost sales by telling members that he picks the best and why he picks the best.

Work on every angle of capitalizing your name and you'll not only find sales a lot better, but you'll knock out all department store competition big enough to be noticeable.

Make Pro Partner of Santa Claus

ALTHOUGH we know nothing of the circumstances of the case described in the quoted paragraphs following, we are printing the story as sent to GOLFDOM by a western correspondent, and making some comments of our own relative to the position of the pro in the case.

The article, as sent us, reads:

"A golf club officer who believes in seizing every opportunity between seasons to keep golf interest keen is _____, Secretary, _____ Country Club, _____, Colorado.

"He sent a letter the middle of December to the wives of all _____ Country Club members. He suggested golf equipment and novelties for gifts. This was his letter—

"Dear Madam:

"During December I imagine that wives of men are pretty much like husbands of women. They rack their brains in an attempt to arrive at suitable gifts to present on Christmas eve!

"Men are generally fed up on socks and ties. While the old boy may smile and act happy when presented with a tie of many colors, down deep in himself there is likely to live a feeling different from that which his actions attempt to show.

"So, as Secretary of the _____ Country

Club, it occurs to me that I should be able to assist you. Your husband likes golf. I feel sure that to him an item of golf equipment will mean more on this Christmas morning than anything else you could select for him.

"I offer this merely as a friendly suggestion, hoping to aid you in the selection of a gift that will carry happiness to him.

"The _____ Sports Store and The _____ Hardware Company both carry complete lines of things for the golfer that I know he will like for Christmas.

"With best of wishes for a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, I am,
Sincerely,

"Secretary."

"Using a large display advertisement, headed "Thanks, _____", The _____ Sports Store, mentioned in the Christmas golf letter, reprinted it in a large newspaper advertisement.

"A noticeable influence on purchase of golf supplies for Christmas gifts followed the letter."

So much for the yarn as submitted. Now here's GOLFDOM's reaction:

The golf club whose official wrote the letter obviously is an adept sales correspondent and the results of his letter, so the testimony states, stirred up business for the stores handling golf equipment. It means that the business going to the stores was business taken from the club's own pro shop. Whether the shop was operated by the club or by its pro as part of his contract, the official's excellent sales letter diverted some golf sales from the club shop with consequent handicapping of the club's operations.

But what are you going to do about it when the club is closed around the Christmas shopping time? If the pro lives in town such a letter might direct purchasers to him and if he's on the job he ought to be able to make a goodly little profit around Christmas. In many towns it is possible to operate the club shop's selling quarters for a couple of weeks before Christmas and cash-in on the holiday shopping.

Pros will find their club officials in the holiday mood of helpfulness and if some effort and resourcefulness is exercised there is no reason why such expert sales help as that in evidence in the case cited above, shouldn't be allied with the pros' interests.