



Clarkson Not Just Pro But Merchant Prince

By HERB GRAFFIS

EVER so often you hear the professional gentry singing the blues about the pro's job being tough and under-paid, the future gloomy and the present made sorrowful by the big caddy boys being picked for jobs that should be filled by competent pros. The pro's job is tough in some respects. So's mine. So are those of most other fellows. And considering the annual stipend of Ruth, Hornsby, Cobb, Grange, Tunney, Lenglen and other professional athletes there seems to be some reason for the wall of the professional golfer as he thinks of the financial aspect of his job. And then I think of fellows like Dick Clarkson at Duluth.

Clarkson's club, the Northland Country club, is a fine organization. Bunch of good fellows in it, good course and in a splendid, live city. But, as good as the picture is, it is duplicated at a number of other clubs where the pros are mourning the fate that made them professional golfers. If these other pros would snap out of the

rut and steer their course from Clarkson's experience they'd rejoice in a steady annual profit that would be a banner year for many a fair sized retail merchandising business in a city of Duluth's size.

A Good Picker

Dick Clarkson gets profits that would be losses for many pros because he has trained himself to be a good picker of merchandise and to select stocks that are of the right sizes and styles.

He carries good stocks of imported golf suits, sweaters, hosiery, garters, belts, caps, gloves and Bronson steel arch golf shoes. Sweaters, hosiery, shoes and caps are poison to the profits of many pros because they don't use good judgment in selecting their stocks. Clarkson picks with care and limits his stocks so he gets quick and frequent turnover. This works out so the style element of the Clarkson stock is strong, and his buyers are the sartorial Princes of Wales in Duluth; thus giving him a two-fold assurance of profit.

Imported cane seats and umbrellas are features of his stock that not only add "toze" to the store but yield a good profit.

I noticed that Clarkson has the same thing to contend with that many other pros have, a shop layout that is not suitable for the best display of the stock. But by making the most of the opportunities afforded and always keeping his shop and stock clean and well arranged he gets real selling value into his store.

Capitalizes Reputation

For miles around Duluth "Clarkson" is the Tiffany mark on a golf club. In fact, he gets orders for his clubs from all over the United States, and makes the most of the prestige of this long distance trade in his local selling. He makes a strong point of clubs manufactured in his own shop. He imports Stewart irons and makes them up in individual clubs and in matched sets. For 30 years Clarkson has been in the golf business, 14 of which have been spent with the Northland club, and during that time he always has prided himself on the craftsmanship of the clubs made in his shop. The result has been to give all the clubs handled by the Clarkson shop the mark of "class." When other pros get working on this basis they will have little to fear from department store competition for good club business. This reputation also hangs on the clubs that he buys already made-up. If Clarkson handles them, the trade knows that they are selected by an expert judge of clubs, rather than being just items of a stock bought in a big quantity by some store buyer whose chief concern is getting something that can be sold at a long profit. He never loses an opportunity to put across this story in such a deft, convincing and honest fashion that it is retold by his customers. Part of the golf gospel in the Duluth sector is that if a Clarkson club isn't going right, it's the player's fault.

A Perpetual Inventory

In the picture of a section of Clarkson's shop you will observe that the clubs all carry tags. The prices in plain figures make sales automatically lots of times when Clarkson and his staff are busy, and the tags serve the further purpose of providing the foundation for a perpetual inventory. He can tell every week how his stock is moving and can keep enough of a stock on hand to supply all demands.

It's my observation that this detail is

one of the most neglected phases of the merchandising operations of the majority of pros. I recall an instance earlier in the year that impressed me with the lamentable oversight in this respect. The opening months of the golf season in the central states were wet, and my golf raincoat was lost, strayed, or stolen. There was a big play on raincoats, but it was just my luck to be caught in a hole when clubs when a shower threatened and I needed a raincoat. Here was a profit ready to be placed with the pro, but due to the demand I found the only raincoats left in stock were either so small they'd bind one of Singer's midgets, or so big they'd make tarpaulins for a load of hay.

I must say that I consider the raincoat makers guiltier than the pros in not seeing that a supply of average, popular sizes were stocked. The manufacturers are supposed to be smart and ever alert merchandisers, while many of the pros are just getting past the grammar school grades in selling. The manufacturers probably are about all that they are credited with being as merchandisers but they certainly overlooked a bet in this case. Often, I am satisfied, the manufacturers condemn the pro for lack of selling force when the real reason for complaint is that the manufacturer has been negligent in teaching and co-operating with pros who are anxious to move the goods if they knew how.

That's more or less of a digression, but I was reminded of it when I considered how Clarkson's tag inventory system would have helped some pro to sell me—and a host of other golfers—raincoats during the showery season.

Moving Slow Stock

Clarkson's policy is to have every possible item in his stock cleaned out at the end of the season. He is exceedingly careful not to carry any of what he calls his "dry-goods stock" over to the next season. Due to the quality reputation and exclusive character of his merchandise he can put a "mark-up" on his stock that allows plenty of reduction for an end of the season closing out. With golf apparel becoming the recognized attire for winter sports he never has any difficulty in cleaning out at the end of the season and starting the spring with a fresh stock.

If he finds that he has any clubs that he wants to sell, he has no difficulty in disposing of them to public parks players who are quick to jump at the chance to

buy a Clarkson club. There's another place where the cash value of a pro's high reputation as a master of his trade comes into play.

Back of all of his work and success in merchandising is courtesy and a conscientious study of his members' requirements. Being accommodating and well stocked, and treating all of his members on a

which only 9 holes are built at the start, costing anywhere from twelve to twenty thousand dollars, which usually leaves them with ten to fifteen thousand dollars to finance the club and grounds around the building.

2. I would say that these plans should be supplemented by a model landscape plan for the arrangement of the club order to bring them out to ad-

criticism which I offer to the
ished which I think is an at-
gement, is that the women's
the second floor, no matter
tilated, owing to the sloping
full ceiling height and floor
und to be hot and unattrac-
during the summer months.
In the south is that second
should have full height ceil-
pitch to the roof, and pro-
where possible, together with
tilation. From a residential
e story and a half house, as
stairs is concerned, is not a
se for the South.

Yours very truly,
E. S. DRAPER,
Landscape Arch. and Eng.,
Charlotte, N. C.

in organizing clubs in the South. I am presuming that your plan is based on the normal or yearly needs of a southern town country club, and not for resort purposes which, of course, might dictate an entirely different type of club. I should like to see a blue print of regular scale plan when you work this up as I might be able to offer some criticism based on the work which we have done on ten or twelve southern country club grounds and golf courses where we planned and developed the grounds as well as planning and building the golf courses.

Offhand I think your idea is a good one, and would offer the following suggestions:

1. That you supplement this present plan by having an architect draw a model sketch for location of a club building to cost not over ten to twelve thousand dollars, based on the fact that southern building costs are about 25 per cent lower than costs in the north. There is a wide-felt need for a model plan for a club house in this class as there are many southern country clubs that have been and are being organized where the ultimate plans call for an 18 hole golf course, but in

How to Tell If Your Greens Are True

ON CASUAL examination, a freshly mowed green may appear smooth as a billiard table, but closer inspection will often reveal small areas where the mowers have left the grass longer than the surrounding turf. This is the indication of a slight depression in the green, sometimes not over a quarter of an inch deep but sufficient to deflect a well hit putt.

There may be more of these depressions on your greens, particularly on the short holes, than you imagine and they may be at the root of the member's complaints that the greens are not true.

An easy solution of this trouble is to supply the men who push the mowers with a pail of top dressing and instruct them to go over the green after cutting and sprinkle a handful or so of the dressing in each spot where the grass appears long. A few daily treatments of this nature will fill up the depressions and give you a true, even putting surface, that a well-manicured green should have.