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Golfdom

THE BUSINESS JOURNAL OF GOLF

MAY, 1929

SURVEY OF MERCHANDISING SHOWS pros in big advance AS MASTERS OF THE GOLF MARKET

By HERB GRAFFIS

At the 1928 P. G. A. meeting at Cleveland, Jack Mackie, veteran pro and P. G. A. official, handed out a good reminder to this writer and other reporters who concern themselves with the pro golf situation when he quoted the part of the Rubiyat concerning the difficulty of erasing the words put down by "the moving hand."

This warning always is in good order. It becomes especially impressive as we read the following paragraphs from an issue of a sporting goods dealer magazine a couple of years ago. The dope was wrong and a laugh to the knowing ones when it was printed; it increases in its silliness as the years go on.

Under the heading, "The Changing Golf Market," this mess of misstatement ran: "Times change. We must change with them. The baseball equipment storekeeper who thinks that the selling season is just one week long is going to be left at the post.

"Yes, times change. Right now, some golf-goods manufacturers do not want to believe it. They have been selling their outputs in past years to golf pros. While they lost considerable amounts in bad debts, many were able to show a profit on each year's cycle. Last year and the year before they didn't do so well. "The weather 'er sumpthin'."

"The fact of the matter is that the sporting goods merchants by more capable meth-

ods—have corralled over 90% of the nation's golf goods consumption.

"That's natural, because it is unnatural for a teacher of a game to be coincidentally a merchant. As golf increases in popularity, the pro has less time and less inclination to sell golf goods.

"This year some manufacturers are still chasing the pro business that—for the greater part—has permanently vanished. Meanwhile, wiser manufacturers are getting real footholds in anchored accounts—the stores."

Truth Is Assuring

There is a sterling example of a kid whistling in a graveyard at midnight to keep from being scared to death. Even considering the vast growth in the ranks of golf beginners on the municipal and daily fee courses who might be inclined to buy cheap golf goods from the stores due to cut-price attraction, competent authorities among the leading manufacturers say that the entire golf business of the U. S. is divided about 60% for the pros and 40% for the stores. In the case of first-class golf merchandise, the percentage in the pros' favor runs between 10% and 15% higher.

The pro who is on the job and is reconciled to the fact that buying education of his members takes persistence, resourcefulness and eternal merchandising vigilance has every reason to be satisfied with

the outlook. As for the manufacturers of golf goods, there are some of them who never will make a dent in the pro market, for the pro market is too knowing. The pro has too much at stake to handle the cut-priced junk that is poured out on the department and other store markets by manufacturers whose merchandise can't get pro endorsement due to its unsatisfactory design, its poor materials and the unskilled and casual methods of making.

The real "big shots" in the golf manufacturing business are putting more emphasis on merchandising through the professional than ever before. They know the pro makes and controls the golf market.

The Credit Situation

A thorough and impartial analysis of the credit situation in the golf goods field shows that the pro end is in better shape than the other outlets, due to the extremely high rate of mortality among the small sporting goods stores. Not only is the present satisfactory, but the condition is improving remarkably. The P. G. A., some time ago, took this credit matter in hand. The organization started out on a credit clean-up that was featured with a stiffer policy than is claimed by a whole lot of businesses that are boasting of their association's activities in credit supervision.

Inside details of the extent of this work cannot be revealed, but some evidence of the very gratifying results are obvious in the following letter from C. B. Johnson, secretary of the National Association of Golf Club Manufacturers. Mr. Johnson tells GOLFDOM:

"There has been a noticeable improvement in professional credits since the golf club association and the golf ball makers association have combined in publishing their list of delinquent accounts. The officers and members of the P. G. A. are to be congratulated upon their co-operation by the two associations named above in bringing to the attention of their members the necessity of keeping their credits in good shape with their sources of supply.

"It is not the attempt of either of these groups to bear down unnecessarily or unfairly upon any group or individual, whether they be professionals or dealers, in the matter of credit extension, but rather a desire to clarify the credit situation in the interests of the industry itself. It is quite obvious that a small percentage of indifferent professionals can affect largely the credit situation of the vast number who have appreciated the impor-

tance of keeping their credit record clean and it is the hope that with the co-operation of the P. G. A. and the individual members, as well as the state associations, they will be able to impress upon all professionals, not only of their membership but others, that better service, better prices and better business dealings all around can be accomplished through a more careful consideration of individual credit extension.

"Both the National Association of Golf Club Manufacturers and the Golf Ball Manufacturers Association are seeking constructive criticism and suggestions from the professionals as a body, not only in the credit side but also in all problems concerning the sale or purchase of golf clubs. Each professional is at liberty to write to these associations, or their own headquarters, if they are P. G. A. members, giving any suggestions they can that might correct what they may consider methods that ought to be changed and these suggestions, in turn, will be passed on to each member of the two associations.

"In brief, the object primarily is to work in closer harmony with all golf professionals."

Why Sing Blues?

Pros have no monopoly on merchandising misery. Their problems are not the



PRINCE GEORGE HOTEL GOLF COURT
where you may exercise where you dine

*Hall Hall is Spring, sweet Spring
With Golf Brides on the wing.
Spring, Oh! Spring, when winds of morn will roam
Away from business cares and Home Sweet Home.*

GOLF LESSON No. 1
by Mr. Cliff Drake, Professional
Instructor of the Prince George Golf School.

THE DRIVER

In starting your drive, the weight should be equally balanced on both feet, the right slightly advanced. The club should be started backward with a slow and steady movement, left hand turning inward and under the shaft, raising the club to a horizontal position over the right shoulder, pivoting on the ball of the left foot while no swing, or the same time throwing the weight on the right foot. Start the club on the downward swing with hands and arms in unison gathering speed as you get to the ball, and carrying the club head outward after hitting the ball. This will give you the complete "follow through" and added distance to your drive.

Cliff Drake, Instructor

You are cordially invited to inspect the Golf Court located in the
New England Dining Room. Open daily except Sunday.



Back of menu of hotel with indoor course features its pro and his instruction



Photo, Underwood and Underwood

Jack Tarrant, pro at Pasadena (Calif.) municipal course, has big classes of pupils he teaches in that city's famous "Rose-Bowl"

life-and-death matters that confront most small retailers. From the mere fact that the last couple of years has seen the pros seriously studying their merchandising has resulted in an improvement in practice, profits and promise. It seems to us the pros would be better off to put an abrupt stop on singing the blues, for actually there's no valid reason for moaning, but quite the contrary as a general thing in pro golf.

George J. Pulver, pro at the McGregor Links, Saratoga Springs, N. Y., who wrote on pro matters in April GOLFDOM, comments on the pro situation as it lines up with that of other retailers in an interesting letter which we print herewith. It is something for the boys to think about in getting set for further advance in the golf goods selling field which they plainly command today. Pulver says:

United Front Imperative

"The evils the pro golfer is facing today are no greater, nor different, than those which nearly all retailers are, or have been at death-grips with, since the war. Our problems are quite in common with ones obtaining in other lines, whether it is distributing needles or reapers. If we are to keep our place under the sun, we must do as other retailers have had to do.

"Why all the mergers during the last few years? Why have cut-rate drug stores come into being unless to fight the Liggett and other combines and why have individual

grocers, hardware stores, and dry-goods distributors been forced to pool their buying, if it is not to meet the competition of those chains, which represent so much wealth that their volume and cash buying enables them to cut the price to the consumer in order to get the business?

"This is the era of combines, of ceaseless striving for all available business, and the individual is being swallowed up by groups who have made themselves all-powerful by acting together. There is probably no organization so decentralized, so individually opinionated, and so remotely co-ordinated, considering their economic importance, than the professional golfers today. While they represent thousands of dollars worth of transactions, they meet infrequently, they hold no conventions to cull over their ideas, and except for an occasional gathering of delegates once a year, there is very little done to bring the members closer together.

"We must act more in concert that we may have more power, that we may create more respect, or be brushed aside by the combined, and the aggressive. We must not expect anyone to feel sentimental towards us—there exists little altruism in business today—the fittest only survive, and for one, I believe we should yield an inch only when forced to do so. Let us fight for uniform trade practices, equal discounts, and find out why golf equipment continues to filter out through secret channels to be dumped on the market by unauthorized agencies, who sell with no regards to what should constitute a fair profit taking on sales."