

Pro Business Brains Active in Drive for Women's Trade

OUT of the letters and interviews GOLFDOM has received on the subject of 1930 selling plans of pros one point stands out plainly—women's business is coming in for a feature play.

For the past four years there has been a steady, enthusiastic growth of women's play. It has been the big factor in instruction for a lot of the fellows have said they would have had lesson calendars as wide open as speakeasies in New York's furious forties if it hadn't been for the sisters of the congregation coming up for salvation. Of special significance has been the effect of women's play on the daily fee golf courses. A couple of years ago the fee courses were worried about the non-productive early days in the week. Now the wash-day play is strong for the women who have no private club affiliations hike for the fee courses after their week-end denial.

Basing estimates on what seems to be a fair history of women's golf growth during the last four years, there are many competent students of the golf business who forecast that in eight years there will be more women than men playing golf.

So, with these signs so plain, it looks like any pro who isn't giving the development of his women's business serious and studious attention is asleep while opportunity is paging him. But what to do to make the most out of this new market still has the boys baffled. And you can't blame them when you think of how the female of the species has the smartest merchandisers in the world frequently out-guessed on style preferences and other shopping actions. Add to that the fact that some of the best pros are downright afraid of women and you see the profitable development of the women's golf market is no set-up. A woman around a golf club is uncertain, coy and hard to please. Even the reporters are scared of getting any closer than the outskirts of a woman's golf tournament, and the pro who has to be on the job while these tournaments are being run frequently is entitled to the D. S. M. But in the very intensity of women's play is the tip-off for the pros' main point in

selling women's clubs. When you can put across the story that they haven't a chance against the other women players unless their playing equipment is right, you have them won.

Women's Present Outfits Bad

Women already have done enough shopping around for bargains in golf clubs and acquired enough of their husband's discarded clubs to make nine out of ten women's bags pitiful collections of equipment. Some of the boys tell me that their most successful factor in selling clubs to women springs up during instruction when a woman is doing much better with one club than with others in her bag. The smart pro points out that the results are better because the club is right, they follow up with some line about the pupil not being able to play golf in an evening dress and high-heeled shoes any more than they could play it with a club that was not fitted to the player or the shot. Then the pro has a chance to show his stock of women's clubs. Right there comes one of the usual shortcomings in the pro campaign for women's business. The stock of women's clubs in most pro shops is not distinguished apart from the regular stock and the chance to play on the women's shopping instinct is lost.

Those pros who have been doing the most business in women's clubs have told me that a sign or two over the women's section of the display rack has jazzed up sales noticeably. Sometimes along the line of the "specially selected," "exclusive," "latest models," "personally fitted," "sold only at leading country clubs," the fellows say goes across good on signs in this spot. The last mentioned phrase sounds like pure bull and that's what it is, but it clicks with the women. The pro who told me he used a sign like that said he got the hunch from looking over the ads in the women's magazine his wife had at home. He figured that the line must be good since it was used by so many of the successful national advertisers.

Sell Them Prestige

One of the fellows in Florida who prefers

that his name not be mentioned spoke out plainly on this subject of women's business. He said:

"If the pros let this gold mine be grabbed away by the department stores I haven't any sympathy for the boys when they start to crying about the easy picking being gone. They have the sweetest chance on earth to get women's business for the women look to the pro as the authority on every thing pertaining to golf. Sure, they'll be inclined to chase after the bargains at the stores but any man who is onto his job can offset this by spreading around the word that the club bought at the pro shop is a superior and exclusive product, personally selected by a pro authority, so she is getting something better than most women even have a chance to buy.

"Women like this last line. I sell lots of them clubs when they are south for the winter just because they want to have something that allows them to ease out the information that they "winter in the south." This may burn up some of the other boys for I sell to their members, but they can protect themselves just like I do when I am at my northern club, by making my shop have a reputation for women's clubs.

"You have to give a lot of attention to women's golf business at this stage of the game—or should. Be patient and go over the whole stock with them. Usually in a pro shop there's not a stock of women's clubs big enough to make this much of a job, and that's too bad. When you're sure that they have the club that is right for them it isn't a bad idea to take them out to the practice tee and give them a few pointers on the use of the club. This sounds like a lot of trouble and a waste of time and money, but you have to remember that in the early stages of any business you can't neglect development and chances for free advertising with a view toward the future business."

It's the zero hour for the pro business advance on the central and northern golf fronts so the bright generals of the pro business army had better have their plans for battle with the women's buying sector pretty well laid out or they'll be sobbing about lost chances when the 1930 sales tickets are added up to tell the story of the season's action.

Presidents, send us names of your 1930 green-chairman, greenkeeper, manager and pro.

Greenkeepers' Wives Hold Successful Meeting

DURING the N. A. G. A. convention at Louisville the women's auxiliary of the association held its annual meeting and reelected Mrs. Julia Varn Hagen, wife of the Plum Hollow greenkeeper, president. Mrs. Herbert Shave, Oakland Hills, was elected vice pres.; Mrs. Elmer Affeldt, Glen Oaks, sec., and Mrs. John Gray, Essex, treas.

The women are making a fine practical organization out of this body and each convention sees the feminine attendance increase. They plan to have a record attendance of women at the Columbus meeting next year and to put on a program that will combine business and pleasure in good balance.

The N. A. G. A. and Mr. and Mrs. George Davies of Louisville united to see that the women's program of sight-seeing and other entertainment was interesting. Among the places visited were Lincoln's birthplace, Stephen Foster's homestead, the cathedral at Bardstown. Luncheons at the wayside inns where Kentucky cooking was handled in its native haunts and the Davies' luncheon at the Beach Springs club were gastronomic features of the program.

A trip through Mammoth cave was a high-spot of the women's entertainment program. This was a bit strenuous but at that two of the women and 22 men hoofed the 3½ miles of tortuous underground passages. Mrs. Varn Hagen related that the cave Route No. 1 is something to be recommended for gazelles but for any of the girls who have acquired a tendency toward the buxom, the rough going is something to be avoided.

The business side of the meeting was rather informal but profitable. Many of the women exchanged notes on making their own house grounds beauty spots of their courses and in this work every golf club owes its greenkeeper's wife all possible encouragement. With the so-called boss of the household pretty well worn out after 12 to 14 hours on the course, the greenkeeper's home grounds often look like the shoemaker's kids' shoes. The women got together, compared notes and ambitions, and came out of their huddle with the firm conclusion that if their "old men" don't give them plenty of a helping hand with their own house landscaping he is going to have a tough session.