



"Offer All Services and Succeed"

Pressler's Secret for Building Shop Volume

By D. SCOTT CHISHOLM

Associate Editor, Country Club Magazine

Harry Pressler, young in years, but old in pro-shop and teaching experience

IT IS A RARE thing to find a great musician or a talented literary man who ever amounts to a "wet cloth" as a business administrator, a merchandising expert or as a salesman. They just don't team up. I happen to know scores of excellent golf instructors, professionals through and through, who live, breathe and have their very being in golf, but possess no more business fundamentals than the man in the moon. On the other hand I have the pleasure of being on quite friendly terms with a number scattered throughout the land whose business knowledge and naturally keen mind for merchandising and the selling of same is truly remarkable.

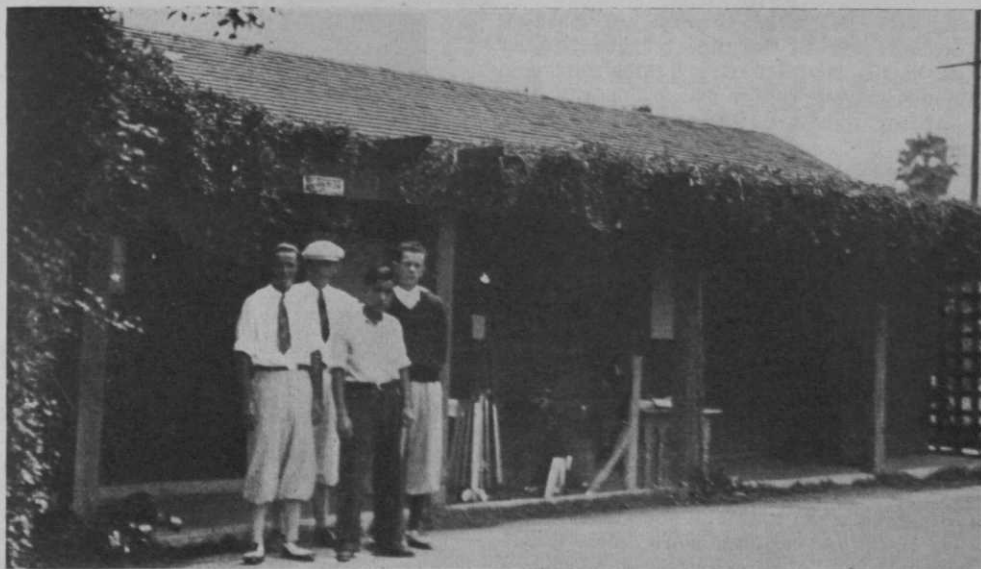
To this category belongs Harry Pressler who holds forth as professional at the delightfully situated San Gabriel Country club in the Los Angeles sector—some twelve miles, maybe fourteen, from the Los Angeles city hall. Harry is 32 years old but has been in and around caddie houses and golf shops since he was 10, so, therefore, as you can see, he's really what I would style an old timer in the game. As professionals go today, any lad who has been a dozen years at the bench or knocking around golf shops as assistant to a pro, must be hailed as an old timer. Isn't that so? Well, Harry Pressler, for being four years with the Hacienda C. C. as professional, another four years with the Wil-

shire club as assistant to Louis Berrien, then five years with the Brentwood club where Olin Dutra is now located, and the past four years as his own master at San Gabriel qualifies as a member of the profession and to be unusually well versed to talk on any subject appertaining to his chosen profession—a profession he dearly loves—and lives.

Takes Tip from Big Store Ads

"How's business, Harry?" I fired at him one sunny day last month. "No kick coming," replied Harry. "It's sort of spotty. Lots of lessons, of course, but to keep pace with two years ago or even last year, I have to think of something new, something following the ideas I get from the newspaper ads of the department stores, racy, spicy, attractive, eye catching, to impress my members when they enter my shop. I realize that these department stores employ experts to buy, write advertising and sell and, would you believe it, I read their daily ads just as religiously as I do the sports pages."

This, coming from a successful golf professional who never gives less than 6 lessons each day of 350 in the year, startled me. "Here," I said to myself, "is a smart lad. One of the ancients, as it were, more modern than anyone I've ever ran onto in his profession." As I looked at his display of merchandise most attractively laid out in a relatively small space (in fact I



Here are Pressler and his staff in front of the San Gabriel shop. Notice the open display of clubs, etc., on the shop porch

have never seen so much stock invitingly displayed in such a small amount of space) I further added to myself, "This boy mistook his trade. What a head he'd have made for a Marshall Field."

There was an artistic sign on each article of wearing apparel, all printed by hand by one of his many Mexican caddies. And everything for sale marked in plain figures. The signs looked to me as if they were written by a professional sign man, none glaringly huge or vulgar in their boldness. And, mark you, all reserve stock carefully packed away in cedar chests and as well cared for as could be in any department store. (I make mention of department stores freely because Pressler did so—that's where he's wise.)

"You seem to have a wee haberdashery store here," says I to Harry. "Well, I keep quite a stock. I have knickers, sweaters, silk shirts, underwear, garters, hats, gloves, hose, half hose, athletic shirts, golf shirts, caps, visors, belts, shoes, studs, cuff links, safety pins, buttons, 200 golf clubs (usually) on hand, tees, balls, golf bags and every other known requisite for golf. My customers are my friends and my friends are good to me and to retain that priceless friendship I offer every known service I can think of to add to their comfort. I take especially good care of the ladies. I know what their trade means in the days to come. I realize the

future there is in their patronage and I am building a foundation for greater things."

At this stage of our interview I realized I was talking to one of the smartest men in his profession, a man of unusual vision, one who, although one of the old timers, was more modern in his ideas of merchandising and member service than any I had met of the modern school. I saw a member walk up to his shop, pick up three balls, sign a slip and walk on. At the sight of that it was not necessary for me to ask him how he transacted that end of the business. He did tell me, however, that his club guaranteed all the bills incurred and signed for by his members. I felt Harry was wise enough to have such a solid arrangement with his club even before he told me so.

Assistants Handle Sales

"I don't have much time to attend to the sales end of my shop. I don't have to. I have Alec Follmer, my caddie master, Don Matthews, my assistant and club maker, and Tim Acosta, my club cleaner, right on the job and all are trained and well versed in salesmanship. I see to that. Never does one of them lose a sale for want of knowledge of what they are handling and all of them can measure a member for a union suit as well as an expert in a haberdashery store. The boys are clever and I

am perfectly satisfied they are working for me 100% all the time. That's 99% of the battle, isn't it? Great thing this confidence in your fellow man."

At this juncture Harry Pressler jerked out his left arm and looked at his watch. "Holy gee, I've a lesson in three minutes—I must rush along. See you later. Don't write any bull—if you write anything," he shouted as he began a sprint to his teaching grounds some 200 yards distant.

The rest of the story of this unusual professional, so amazingly interesting in all its branches, I will rattle off on my Corona in quick-time order—using "no bull" as requested. Harry Pressler was born in California and has lived there all his life. He started off as a caddie and for a while used his "dukes" with marked success at a number of Los Angeles' athletic clubs when amateur bouts were amateur bouts and nothing more. Mrs. Leona Pressler, one of the outstanding women golfers of this continent, and Harry were married ten years ago—it may have been less. Mrs. Pressler, contrary to fictitious rumors, learned all her golf from her talented husband and it was only recently that he told me that Leona would be the greatest woman player in the country, without any doubt, if she would only practice.

Pressler Is Teacher to Champs

I have known many great instructors in my time but I question very much if I ever knew a more successful one than Pressler. He is a maker of champions and he has a few young fillies in the making—especially girls. The reason I make the statement that he is one of the greatest of instructors is because I know a young lady who once held the woman's championship of New York City who went to Harry in desperation. She played well enough to get along but that wasn't good enough for her. She wanted to reach the top. I had seen her play in tournaments on several occasions and thought she had the most wretched form I ever saw for a low handicap golfer. She hit from outside in to get her 160 yard drives off down the center. A 175 yarder with the old ball overjoyed her. Her grip was all wrong. She pushed her right hand so far under the shaft that it reminded me of the time I used to go catching trout under big stones.

Then she invited me to play with her on the day this interview was given me by Harry. What a transformation I saw. She didn't seem like the same player I



Signs like this help sell merchandise. A caddie makes them for Pressler

knew three months previous. Her frail body of 118 pounds whipped through that first drive like a Collett and sent that tee shot just 200 yards, splitting the center. Her mashie to the green wasn't to the green at all—it was to the pin. I have never witnessed in my 30 years of golf such a change for the better. And Harry Pressler did it all. Three lessons every week and constant practice.

Well Trained Mexican Caddies

The San Gabriel caddies are 98% of Mexican parentage and are unexcelled anywhere. They have been trained to quite an extraordinary extent by a former caddie-master named Tommy Langdon. They are also the essence of loyalty to Pressler insofar as the selling of second hand balls is concerned. Every time a caddie goes out on a job his name is written in a book along with the name or names of his employer, likewise the time going out and time returning. Everything is system and yet no unnecessary red tape is anywhere apparent.

I was very much impressed with a picture gallery which decorates the caddie-master's room and which contains the photographs of every caddie with a license badge—taken full length. The caddies pay two bits for this "publicity." He keeps the film for his own use. That idea, a splendid one, keeps the lads interested at all times and improves the morale.