



"There's gold in them frills" opines the expert prospector for pro profits as he considers the cost and selling prices of a properly selected stock of golf wearing apparel. The pro who picks his stock right and does not get stuck at the season's end with a lot of merchandise that may go out of style, gets a welcome additional profit from apparel. Above is the apparel display at the Oak Park C. C. (Chicago district) pro shop. Note there are no "Grand-Canyon-at-Sunset" color schemes in the merchandise

Here's Model Pro Shop Display

And in this section of the Oak Park C. C. pro shop you'll see what excellent use Ray Crossland, the pro, has made of the same sort of display material that the stores use in selling golf wearing apparel

Pro Market Brighter and Bigger When Pros Study Their Sales

By HORTON SMITH*

PROFESSIONAL golfers now are bluntly confronted with one of the primary problems of every other business, study of the market. The pros' possession of 60% of the dollar and cents volume of the golf market today is a tribute to the pros' common sense and an exhibition of their strategic marketing position and good fortune. This domination of the market has attracted able competition from experienced merchants so the pros no longer can take their marketing in a leisurely matter of fact way. When it is considered that the major part of pro earnings is the shop sales income, the seriousness of pro sales study and development must be fully appreciated.

The first thing that any good business man does when he starts his business operation is to determine the size of his market. How many professionals have made an investigation of the size and character of their prospects for sales? I'd say, off-hand, not one in a hundred. You hear pros talking about how much business certain fellows are doing at clubs and probably have wondered why it is that two fellows at similar clubs differ as much as \$6,000 a year in gross sales. I have seen cases like this where both of the pros are apparently equal in personal and business qualities. I now think that I have found the secret of the success of the more prosperous pro. He knows what his sales should be and the other fellow is simply shooting in the dark.

Start by Market Analysis

The smart pro will take a few evenings with his assistant's help and make a complete inventory of the equipment in his members' bag racks. Such an inventory should go about as follows:

BAGS: Kind—condition—size—estimated price—bought here or elsewhere.

CLUBS: Full set or casual—number of woods—kind of shafts—number of irons—kind of shaft—general condition—probable age—bought here or elsewhere.

Such an inventory will be an eye-opener. It will show the pro just who are his best prospects for quick sales and in that way enable him to direct his sales efforts effectively.

The inventory of balls is not easy to make, but in its place the pro should take his sales slips for the previous year and analyze them. He can get from his inventory of the rack contents a general idea of the number and make of balls his members are using. He will be able to spot the members who are buying the cut price balls of questionable quality and then be in a position to focus sales effort on those who have been buying cheap balls elsewhere. He can give them a little selling talk on some of the excellent 50 cent balls the pro shops have today, if the member is a bargain hunter. With this information to work on I am sure that any pro of intelligence sufficient to make a success in his work will be able to do a lot toward correcting the straying buying tendencies that have developed these days of cut prices and new retail outlets for golf supplies.

Discover Potential Buyers

Not the least of the values of this suggested market survey is its revelation of the men and women who are about ready to buy clubs and who would be most susceptible to the "buy it wholesale" bunk.

I have made it a practice, during the last three years of my exhibition dates, to inspect the pro shops of the clubs where I have been playing and I believe that I have developed a pretty fair ability to judge the value of the rack contents and the potential buying volume of the members in the gallery. From this extensive, but casual, observation I would hazard the statement that in very few cases have professionals sold as much as half of the sales volume which is immediately available at their clubs.

Basically, an inventory would serve the pro as a guide in his buying. Working from this inventory the pro would govern

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his buying by actual facts instead of by a more or less lucky guess.

The inventory I have proposed should be kept up to date by additions as reported by the boy who cleans the clubs. The clubs of the new members should be checked and added to this inventory so the pro will know how the newcomers rate as prospective customers.

Big Market Now at Clubs

From all of this you will see that I am convinced the best of the new markets for the pro is that undeveloped market right under his hand. There have been plenty of critics warn against the danger of pros pushing sales too strongly, but I have come to the conclusion that most of the fellows who fear this and criticize others who are really selling their members, are pros who either haven't the right selling qualifications or who are constitutionally lazy. When selling is done on a basis of substantial service to the members there is very, very rarely any resentment on the part of the member. The more sales, the better service to the members, or, in the way the member should see the practice; the more service, the better sales.

Pro business this year is spotty, with the pros who are doing better than average business enjoying enough of a volume to more than offset the reduced volume of the fellows who are finding the going tough. Consciously, or unconsciously, I am satisfied that the fellows who are enjoying good business are doing it primarily because they definitely realize how much business at their clubs can be had practically for the asking. In this connection I may mention the eloquence of properly displayed merchandise. A good display of a well selected stock does a lot of asking for business.

We are going through a critical and hectic period of the survival of the fittest in the golf business. Some of the less competent men are getting out of the business. They have been unable to adjust themselves to this new condition that makes the pro, as a merchant of golf, more of an asset to his club than he ever has been before. This economic revision, unfortunately, is being retarded by some inexperienced officials of clubs who hire pros solely because of cheapness and thus deny their clubs and their members the atmosphere and substantial aid that is evident when a thoroughly qualified pro is on the job. This important matter of selecting the right professional and giving him encouragement and a chance to make a good

living has a lot to do with club success in these times when there is spirited competition for members—probably a more vigorous competition than any store competition the pro has to contend with.

Pro Makes the Market

In this respect the pro has an opportunity to exercise a highly important function, the development of the entire golf market. We have today only 2,500,000 active golfers out of a potential, immediately available, market of 50,000,000 men, women and children, who are qualified by age, physical ability, finance and availability of courses, to play golf. Group classes at private and public or semi-public courses, and for high schools, are being used with great success by foresighted pros in making a bigger market. I believe that it pays every professional to give these group lessons free, at least to children, and at nominal sums to adults. It seems to me that the industrial golf leagues such as organized and conducted by Willie Hunter at Montebello, have great possibilities, not only for men but for the women who work in offices, stores and factories. This sort of development results in many individual lessons and equipment sales.

I am strongly of the opinion that something is radically wrong with the methods of the pro who doesn't sell the equipment that his pupils buy. You can see from your own club racks that the people who play the least golf are those with inadequate or improper equipment, and draw your own conclusions as to whether the equipment deficiency is the reason for lack of interest and proficiency in the game. I have no special sympathy for the pro who crabs and pouts about his pupils buying their equipment elsewhere. Instead of sulking and complaining that his members are pickers the pro who is not doing the selling should examine himself. The customer is inclined to favor the pro so if the pro loses this business he certainly must be guilty of some glaring defect in his sales work or his attitude for which he, and not the customer, is responsible.

Watch Women's Market

In travelling around a lot I have noted what the stores are doing to get women's business. The warning is plain: if the pros don't quickly and thoroughly snap into this vital matter of women's sales they are forfeiting an early "in" on the part of the market that will constitute 50% of all golf goods sales in a few years.

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Put signs in your shops on special showings of women's clubs, write letters to your women players about your clubs, get a few good sets in the hands of the most active women players of every handicap, and in every other way do all that you can to stake out a claim to this business of the women. I will say with all the emphasis I can, that the pro who isn't right now making a particularly vigorous play for women's business is risking his own present and future earning power, and is a heavy handicap to the entire pro merchandising operation. We have seen the pros miss out on the rich rewards of daily fee course construction and operation; we have seen them miss the temporary, but large, profit of miniature golf and we have seen them make a huge market for golf goods, only to lose some of that market they should have kept. But in this continuous great growth of golf we constantly are seeing new opportunities for pro profits presented. This women's market is today's biggest opportunity and I say to the pro who isn't making a very thoughtful study of this market and every effort to establish its habit of patronizing him, he will be better off to get out of the pro business and seek employment elsewhere. The entire profession would be better off without such men for their neglect and inertia is a menace to the promotion of buying habits that will assure the pro business future.

You have the children's market that you'll have to step after right quickly. If you haven't been doing something to encourage the children of your members to play golf, or to conduct group classes for grammar school, high school or college students, you are missing one of your best bets for market development and publicity.

Play Grows

President Hoover has appointed a commission that now is engaged in a study of social trends, especially in the athletic activities of the average citizen. I am informed that these investigators have been deeply impressed with the prospects for golf. They are reported as finding a marked decline in athletic "spectatoritis" and a vast increase in active participation in sports, mainly because of golf. I believe that any of the men who have given a great deal of time to exhibition golf will testify that exhibition golf gives the gallery a decided urge to go right out and play. After each big tournament there is a great increase in the number of rounds played in the community. Golf is primarily a per-

sonal game, and one that can't be played by proxy. I have heard, to my deep regret, hundreds of gallerites say, "Let's go out and play, I can miss them that good myself." This phase of the game is elemental. That is why we can look forward confidently to our game attaining huge dimensions, far beyond our present most hopeful anticipation, in the next five years.

It is up to each one of the competent professionals to prepare himself right now to hasten this development of the market and keep the marketing channels under our control. The pro makes the market and if he can't command it, the fault is completely his own. He can make no excuses for failure. And he can offer no reasonable explanation for tardiness, lack of energy or unwillingness to do some immediate and thoughtful planning.

Today the professional has 60% of the monetary value of the year's golf business. He has been favored by destiny and circumstances in arriving at this mastery of the market. But his competitors, even though they are having their miseries with cut prices and junk merchandise today, are taking a good part of their time, money and effort, to plot against the pros' command of this business.

Now are you going to use your heads and hands today, or fold up and let yourselves be beaten out of a certain opportunity of more money than you ever had in the past?

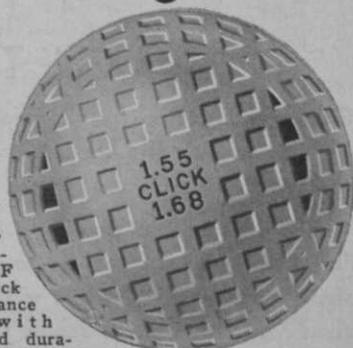
Match Events Help Fee Course Increase Play

ART GRANT, pro-manager at Sagamore Spring C. C., recommends match play tournaments as great promoters of interest and business at fee courses. The events take skillful handicapping and diplomacy on the part of the pro but fully warrant the effort. Grant started the events in 1930 but long before the 1931 season started there was a clamor for a match play schedule.

The Sagamore Spring course, which is at Lynnfield Center, Mass., was enlarged to 18 holes by construction work during last winter. The 9-hole course handled 200 to 300 players week days and up to 500 rounds on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.

Grant's job is to keep the players happy and to keep more of them coming. He is a good example of the wisdom of getting a real pro business man at a daily-fee course.

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