

managers would bring clubhouse equipment manufacturers, food and beverage manufacturers, etc.

Let John Morley as president of the National Greenkeepers association call a meeting to form an advisory board with such men as H. H. Ramsey, president of the U. S. G. A.; Albert R. Gates, administrator; Charles Hall, president of the Professional Golfers Assn.; Thomas Carey, president of the Club Managers association; Robert Powers, editor of the *National Greenkeeper*; Grantland Rice, editor of the *American Golfer*; Charles Gregson, editor of *Golf Illustrated*, and Herb Graffis, editor of *GOLFDOM*.

Why hesitate or delay?

Pros Make Golf Market, Manufacturers Learn

THE PRO can get a good close-up on his importance in golf goods merchandising when he talks with some of the manufacturers. It is plain, from the manufacturers' remarks, that the pros who are in solid at good jobs are invariably good merchandisers. Although merchandising is only one of the pro duties at a club it is so closely interwoven with all other of his activities that it is the tip-off to the man's general rating.

With the survival of the fittest working out in the golf field, as everywhere else, the pros have been showing a vastly improved character of business operations during the past few years. The result has been that the makers of first class golf products now find it more necessary than ever before to make pro volume and pro good-will major factors in their own sell-

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ing. When it is considered that the competition of other retail outlets also has become more aggressive during recent years, the pros are identified as especially entitled to credit for their advance.

Candid comment from Gordon Beckley, secretary of the Beckley-Ralston Company, brings into print some significant details of pro-manufacturer relations as they prevail today. Beckley is an amateur golfer of better than average ability in his own balliwick and as a representative of that class had a proper appreciation of pro authority on playing. When he became a maker of golf goods he also was disposed to favor the pros but temporarily lost hope of pro outlets as feature spots because the pros didn't jump at his goods. Now, after four or five years observing the pro business advance and thus earning the right to speak with some authority on the golf market, Beckley offers some interesting views on the prevailing conditions in golf goods merchandising.

"It is bound to be impressed on any golf goods maker," begins Beckley, "that

the most successful companies in the field are those that have been closest to the professionals. The statement holds good since the birth of golf goods manufacturing in this country and recently has been emphasized by unusually speedy successes made by two comparatively new factors in the club and ball business of the country. The veteran manufacturers were largely responsible for establishing and nursing pro golf in the United States by acting as employment agencies, exhibition promoters, financiers and father confessors of the professionals. They made it possible for the pros to develop the ability to handle employment and financing problems for themselves. This latter development indicates the progress professionals have made—a progress that is continuing at a constantly increasing gait. As a manufacturer, I'd say that today one of the grave mistakes any manufacturer could make is to fail to realize how much that the pro situation has changed for the better during the last three years.

"Pros today have authoritative standing



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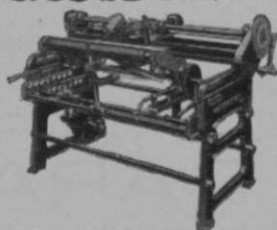
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that can be converted into cash far more extensively than at any previous time in pro history. It cost us some time and money to learn this when we brought out our Stroke Savers. We could go into stores and after answering the first question of the store buyers, "how much?" do some business. But the pros insisted no waiting to see whether or not the clubs would do what we claimed for them.

"Naturally we wanted action and took the line of least resistance. When pro business, which developed slower, grew to good dimensions, we made the interesting discovery that in every territory where pros were selling a good volume of our clubs, store business hiked too. Then it became plain to us that pro business is the first play of the manufacturer whose product will earn pro endorsement. We decided that if you get pros boosting your line the store business will line-up with far less effort and on a much better price basis.

"About the time when we'd arrived at the conclusion to play the pro business strong, the Sand Wedge came along and confirmed our beliefs. The advertising given that club by the pro players and the quick distribution through pro shops made this selling success a convincing demonstration of the pros' prime importance in golf merchandising. The same general policy had worked wonders in establishing ball sales leadership and was repeating its performance for another maker of golf balls.

"We learned from analysis of our own case that we had lost several valuable years and a big potential profit by not making a strong, sharp effort to get pro endorsement right at the start of our campaign. It is our experience that when new clubs are introduced through stores there is public suspicion and a tendency to regard the new design as freaky instead of as a substantial advance. We can date our own 'coming of age' in the golf business when the pros approved our goods, and other manufacturers, I guess, must say the same.

"Close study of what the pro wants rather than trying to push on him what you have to sell, is particularly good business in the golf field because the master professional knows clubs to the extent that his judgment can be thoroughly trusted.

"One pleasing sign of pro business advance is the receptiveness toward new ideas; new ideas, born of the national inventiveness and intensity in studying the sport, are bound to be a feature of Amer-

ican golf. Even from the early days of the game in the United States this Yankee inventive faculty figured, as I understand the veteran George Mattern was the first to make wood club heads of persimmon which represented an improvement over the beech formerly used for the imported heads. This modernization of the old ideas has been given impetus by the professionals becoming aware of the necessity of keeping their market interested and live. The approach clubs, the Sand-wedge type niblicks and variety of ingenious putters all serve to keep the golf market from getting stagnant and for that reason are given prominence by pros who are prosperous merchants. We have found with the Walloper, a new club, that the novelty of the implement is being utilized to provide a live spot of interest in the pro shops, and especially in the cases of veteran professionals this modernization of one of golf's oldest clubs is the subject of comment that leads to sales.

"I should say that the novelty of clubs, playing accessories and selling ideas should be emphatically featured at pro shops for it is at the pro shop the customers should go first for the close-up on what's latest in good golf. Selling ideas like installment purchase prices on matched sets, demonstration sets, and equipment that differs from orthodox design and construction, but retains its legality, are being adopted by the professionals so extensively and successfully that the whole picture of pro merchandising has been changed for the better in the last few years."

THE USE of color is especially valuable in a clubhouse that is being remodeled; too dark rooms can be salvaged with warm yellows, reds, orange and gold, while sunny rooms can be made cool retreats after a hot day on the links with cool blues, greens, grays and mauves.

If you are doing something to promote better operation of golf clubs pass the details along to GOLF DOM'S thoughtful readers.