

Market Analysis, Smart Buying, Makes Pro's Season Profitable

By CARL KOHL

ONE OF THE conspicuously successful young pro merchants is a fellow we shall call Eddie, because Eddie isn't his name and this yarn might prove embarrassing to our modest hero if right names were used.

The tale of this kid's rise is being paralleled by many bright and ambitious assistants. From the time he began polishing clubs he always was anxious to see that the members were pleased by a superior and personalized kind of pro shop service. His boss promoted him to assistant and in that capacity he made money for his boss. The pro for whom he worked was a fellow who wanted to see his protegee rewarded, so he got him a spot as pro at a small town club where the kid, instead of waiting until the season started to get on the job, visited his members, got acquainted and sold goods while the snow was still on the ground. After a few years in the bushes he was recalled to the big time as a master pro. Now we're ready for the story of his first year at a big job.

When I signed for this job early this year (it's the boy wonder speaking from now on), I knew I was following a fine man and I had to begin right away doing some planning. I started with the expense sheet, and budgeted my operating expenses as far as I was able.

I made some cuts, just like other business men have had to do in these times. I had one shiner less in the workshop. I got a live and neat fellow in the shop salesroom for \$50 less than was paid the previous year. I got a very good assistant who wanted to establish a reputation in my district, by giving him all the income from his lessons, instead of the guarantee the previous assistant had received. Of course, I had to hustle like hell and sell lessons for this team-mate and help him sell more by himself, so he would earn enough to keep him very much interested in a good paying job. Those economies may seem rather brutal, but I don't recall any good business men in other fields neg-

lecting to be brutal if the circumstances dictated.

Good Shopping

After I'd got my staff of great boys lined up and told them what we all were up against, I began my shopping. I was able to get some fine buys by this shopping because my deals were made for cash or the quick discount. I shopped for shirts, umbrellas, socks, sweaters, etc., and it's surprising what deals a fellow can get if he shops.

The big danger is that the pro who doesn't know anything about this sort of merchandise will get gypped with some good looking but really terrible stuff, unless he takes a friend who knows this sort of merchandise with him as an adviser, or buys well known, trade-marked merchandise. The good stuff that I got at a better profit, you can bet all of us pushed. There's one item that we got at an inside price that we pushed so it outsold all other stuff we stocked in its line, 10 to 1. That showed us what pros can do when they make up their minds to push something they know is good and that offers them a good profit.

I bought imported sports umbrellas for \$4.25 against the \$6.50 the other boys paid for them. I bought silk rainjackets for \$4.00 against the \$7.75 the fellows who didn't shop with cash had to pay. I worked to get everything we could at the lowest price and I had something to back my proposition with, as I knew my shop would sell a lot more stuff than some of the stores that were getting longer discounts.

Don't get me wrong on this business of being a chisler. You can't tell me anything about the selling power of good advertising to the public on golf goods. It makes the public go for the stuff just that much stronger and quicker, and I'd be a sucker not to take advantage of this "in." But I didn't stick my neck out for stuff the public would be inclined to go for and help build it up, only to have sales snatched away from me by some dealers

who bought lower than I did and could afford to cut under my prices. I figure that if anybody can do business at a profit for less selling cost than I have, something is phoney.

Pep Talks to the Staff

Our gang got together regularly for what the big business birds call sales conferences. I filled the gang full of the old pepper and some hunches on selling that I had read or picked up by listening to smart guys. Any member who hinted about buying something and couldn't be sold by the boys, was reported by them and I tried the fine Italian cunning. Being the boss man set me up, and I could sell stuff a lot of times when better work by the boys hadn't moved it, for folks like to do business with the No. 1 guy.

The best stunt we pulled was to keep watch on the bags. We'd see who needed anything, and if we saw stuff coming in from the outside, especially cut-price balls, we would give the strays a treatment of Old Doctor Eddie's Sovereign Remedy, the Selling with Service salve. This examination of the bags tipped us off to a number of places where we could split sets and supply several purchasers without being stuck with some spares.

When a salesman would come in with some specialty we would take it on consignment and make an honest, persistent effort to push it. We wanted to see if the stuff would go at our place and if it would, we were plenty willing to load up. But being cautious in this matter saved us from being left with some stiff merchandise in the inventory this fall.

We did a land-office business on shoes and jewelry that we handled on consignment. Shoes are good profit makers for the pros, but the hell of it is running the risk of being left holding the bag on stock that isn't ordered right. We kept enough consignment stock to attract buyers, but at that, the stock moved fast enough to make the shoe manufacturer happy.

One place where I picked up a sleeper was selling as caddie prizes reconditioned clubs that we had taken on trade-ins. We also did a big business in prizes for tournaments and parties held at our club by having an assortment of these prizes displayed separately so the fellow who had put off buying these prizes could pick up some great stuff at the last moment.

Ripley it, or not, as we closed down for the season I had only a little over 1% of my season's turnover figure tied up

Jones' Retirement Puts Pros Back Into Big Show

LIGHT IS shed on the gallery attraction of Robert T. Jones, Jr., by statement of figures on 1931 national championship gates. The gate at the 1930 National Open was \$46,765.50. This year the Burke-Von Elm marathon at Inverness grossed \$25,401.50. Last year's amateur coronation ceremonies drew \$55,319 at Merion. This year's Ouimet revival meeting dragged in \$13,831 at Beverly. Accordingly, some gent versed in higher mathematics might figure that Robert was worth \$62,852 of the customers' money per year, and he probably would not be far wrong. Remembering that this draw covered 10 days of play, the figure makes Babe Ruth's salary look like the change a newsboy leaves on his stand.

Jones has attracted about \$40,000 through exhibitions since he went cinema. Of that sum he takes nothing for himself, but puts 25 per cent of the proceeds of his exhibitions into the Atlanta Charity Trust fund.

With Jones out and the pros playing for dollar gallery fees, the summer tournament schedule has been very satisfactory, considering everything. The P. G. A. championship at Providence, the best handled affair in the association's history, took in about \$25,000 and the Ryder cup matches, despite the bull market admission price and three competitive major events in Ohio around the Ryder cup date, brought \$13,500 through the portals.

Other prize money during the summer ran between \$90,000 and \$100,000, with the gallery and entry fees practically offsetting the expense of putting on the affairs. It was repeatedly demonstrated that galleries will go for exhibition golf when the admittance price is moderate.

The Burke-Von Elm team probably will gross around \$14,000 for their showings since the Open. Joe Kirkwood is the Dun and Bradstreet champion of the year. With his reliable act of making a golf ball stand up, sit down, roll over and say "Uncle Joe," he is still bringing them in, both in the big time and out in the hayfield courses.

Revival of interests in exhibition golf due to lower gate prices got over to the rest of the gallery aces later in the season and when they found out that 1,000 times \$1 beat 250 times \$2, they began to go on some profitable prowls.