

# My Members Help Me Run My Pro Shop

By AL COLLINS

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It's our belief that the Kansas City district can boast of a higher percentage of alert, active business men pros than any other of the country's larger districts. Old-timers like Matthews and Robb and bright-eyed boys like Collins, Wother- spoon and the hustling Rimann kid, have the policy of "the club first, last and all the time."

They have made their jobs and are on their toes to pull their clubs along through the rough of depression. They have an idea a minute and they get to work on it. Some of their ideas are lousy. When experience proves that, these KC birds toss the idea away and get busy on something else, but always on something that they think will be of primary benefit to the players.

This "golf shop committee" idea that Collins tells about is something that many other pros could adopt profitably. The old notion that the less the club and its members knew about the shop, the better, is strictly the salami. When the club officials learn how tough it is to operate a pro shop that will please and serve the members and give the pro a chance to buy some groceries and clothes for his family, then they'll have a pretty high idea of master pro business ability.

WITH THE green-chairman's permission I selected a committee of four club members known as the golf shop committee. One acts as chairman and his duty is to clear the committee's recommendations with the Board of Governors.

We meet at regular intervals and invite the club president and green-chairman to attend. The members I selected are all successful business men. The fundamentals of their methods can be applied to any other business. Each one is in a different field and all own their own business. In addition, they are active players and hear locker-room comment and criticism of the golf shop from other members that would not come direct to me.

In other words, I invite constructive criticism—in fact, what I want to know is what is wrong with me or my business—not to hear what a fine fellow I am, etc.

Now this committee does not want to know my markup or how much I make or even what I buy. Those things are not discussed and never will be. What they want to do is to help me become a better pro by getting the players' ideas into my business.

I am convinced we can never make all our members buy by appealing to them to purchase from a sense of duty to the club pro or by complaining or by high power sales methods. The only successful solution is to give *service* and to have the merchandise so attractively arranged that they will *want* to buy.

First, we looked over the shop. We changed the arrangement of cases and the club, through the committee's influence, spent some money for paint and repairs.

Below I list some specific recommendations that I hope will be of value to some other professionals.

1. For new members—A free lesson. The membership committee ballyhoos and I follow it up as an arrangement the club has made and not as my idea. That gives me something to talk to the new members about the first time I meet them. My letter shown herewith goes out immediately upon their acceptance by the Board. I want to get them right into my shop somehow.

2. To increase club rack rentals—If the member keeps his clubs in his locker instead of the shop, have the locker man let you into it and clean up and repair a few of the clubs (free). Replace them with a note attached to the bag explaining

this is a sample of what is done after every round, etc.

3. Go through each member's set in the racks and note what clubs he needs.

### COLLINS LETTER TO NEW MEMBERS

It is my sincere hope and belief that you will find your membership in Indian Hills a constant source of pleasant relaxation, healthful exercise, and friendly associations.

Your membership entitles you to a free golf lesson, in accordance with an arrangement made by the Club with me. I shall be happy to give you this free lesson at your early convenience, and thus have the opportunity to become better acquainted with you and your golf swing.

"Robbie," our president, has asked me to do everything in my power to make it possible for Indian Hills members to enjoy the highest possible quality of golf at the lowest possible expense. In line with this general club policy, I have arranged to supply an excellent brand of golf balls at 3 for \$1.00. This is not an ordinary cut price ball, but has good carrying and rolling quality, with a tough cover that will stand a lot of wear and tear. Try these special balls of ours and if you don't like them, just turn them in and I'll give your money back—that shows what I think of them.

Whenever you are in need of any new clubs, I can supply the latest registered steel-shafted woods for \$5.00, and beautiful steel-shafted irons, of the famous Hagen quality, at \$3.75. Club cleaning, servicing and storing has been reduced to only 75c a month. Wooden tees are 10 for 5c, and other things are proportionately low.

Most members of all clubs prefer to patronize their own "pro," and I wish to reciprocate this cooperation by giving quality merchandise at the lowest possible prices. If you have any suggestions to offer at any time in other services that I can render, I shall be deeply appreciative.

My assistant, Maurice, and I wish to do everything in our power to make this your most enjoyable season of golf.

Yours to command,  
AL COLLINS.

Write personal letters to this list at night. I have increased my club sales already by this method as it shows an interest in each individual's game. I used to wait until they came out but it never seemed convenient for them to buy them.

4. I am experimenting with a sticker for each bag calling attention to the work done, i. e., cleaning is dated each time, etc. I learned from my committee that 90% of the members do not realize all the work we do to earn the club service fee.

5. Advertising—I use the back page of our monthly publication called the *Indian Hills Putter*. This replaces my *Al-O-Gram* little publication of last year. The club will include a message from the pro with the statements and for the small expense I think this should be done every month of the playing season.

6. High spot an item each week. For example, a sand blaster. This can be mounted upon a standard and put in a conspicuous place.

**S**LOT MACHINES paying off in golf balls have had a big run on the Pacific coast this winter. Most of them are leased to the pro on a 20% guarantee basis. Machines are quarter outfits and when a player puts in four quarters without clicking for any balls, he gets a free package of tees. When the player hits the jackpot on the machine dial the sound of balls pouring out of the machine can be heard from L. A. to Denver.

The slot machines have put out a lot of balls for the pros and about cleaned out the mesh marked balls during a time when most of the players were buying dimpled balls over the counter.

### VULCAN NOW SHOWING NEW 1933 LINE OF WOODS AND IRONS

Portsmouth, Ohio.—At the annual meeting of its stockholders and directors, Vulcan Corp., parent organization of Vulcan Golf Co., Portsmouth, Ohio, re-elected Colonel A. L. Mercer president, John W. Snyder vice-pres., H. S. Van Camp treas., and C. E. Dowling secy.

The company coincidentally held its annual sales conference and has returned salesmen to the road with a new line of nine wood models and six lines of iron clubs for both men and women. The company reports increased sales on bags and balls.

H. C. Brownson, former production manager of Vulcan since last season, has been appointed general manager of the company, it was announced.