

To Sell Christmas Golf Goods You've Got to Keep Plugging

By AL COLLINS

Pro, Indian Hill G. C., Kansas City, Mo.

ONE OF THE most difficult merchandising jobs a pro has is that of developing Christmas business. It should be. But its rewards are timely life savers to many pros. Christmas is out-of-season for players north of the Mason-Dixon line. Only a comparatively few of them take vacations in the south or in California starting after the Christmas holidays, so the selling of golf merchandise for Christmas calls for a lively imagination of the far-off delights of warmer days that the pro must put over strong enough to arouse buying interest.

Frequently the point that works best is tactfully to remind the buyer—either husband or wife—that the suggested golf gift is definitely needed by the one to whom the gift is to be made, but it was passed up during the season because the house accounts were enough drain on the purse. However, whether to use this argument or that of deferred payments so the load of Christmas bills will be lightened is something that calls for the pro's own judgment.

The time to start planning a Christmas selling campaign is right now, before the bags are taken out of your shop at the season's close. Every professional who will inventory the contents of each member's bag in his racks not only has a helpful basis for his Christmas business solicitation but a valuable guide for his season-opening operations in 1934.

What makes the Christmas business hard for the pros is that it must be gone after. It doesn't come near the shop. By telephoning to members' homes and at offices, by making personal calls to display samples and by writing personal letters making specific suggestions of the gifts and the price ranges, the pro stirs up business. It is a business that requires a pleasant but persistent follow-up. Very little business will be signed up on your first call. You will be put off for some reason or another but you have to arrange this so the way will be open for you to bring up the subject again.

First of all you have to become enthusiastic about Christmas golf gifts being a good idea for the buyers. When you get that in your mind and have enough industry and patience to sit right down at the telephone and stir up leads without becoming discouraged when you are turned down time after time, you are bound to make a good showing at a time of year that is a dead loss unless special effort is used. A lot of the fellows who have had bad seasons this year and who will be worrying in December how they will get through the rest of the winter can work this Christmas business hard enough to solve their financial problem.

But, as I say, the Christmas business is no push-over. Plenty of pros have tried it without success. Analyzing these failures, it seems to me that their cause, lies mainly in their unwillingness to keep right on the job and thoroughly develop the sales possibilities open to the pro because of his personal acquaintance with his members.

Christmas business is one of my hobbies and December has always been one of my best months. I have tried various sales ideas but in my opinion the one way to get the best results is by personally phoning each member's wife and the husbands whose wives or families play golf.

I start by listing what each person needs. All can use something—if not equipment—apparel or balls, etc. Even a pair of nice socks nets a little profit. Of course, checking each bag will reveal that a club such as a sand blaster, a trick putter or something is missing.

Start phoning early in December, because the wives do their shopping early.

The holidays are the *only* time in the year that we have a legitimate reason for calling the wives. Nine out of ten are groping for ideas of what to buy and are grateful for my interest and suggestions. Many times I tip the husband off and he helps by dropping a hint at home.

There are two important things to emphasize. First, that anything selected can

be exchanged in Spring if not entirely satisfactory. Second, that they can have plenty of time to pay me. They may be burdened down with expense and this often turns the trick.

I offer to deliver and in the case of sweaters, for example, bring a selection to the house at her convenience.

In the December 1st statements a small enclosure is good, although so early it is not promptly effective. However, it paves the way for your follow-up. Those I have used in the past are merely an announcement that I am "open for business." The leading manufacturers also have some little booklets that can be included but I doubt that many of them are worth the expense of a special mailing.

Phoning is tedious work and will take about six hours a day for about ten days (my membership is 350) but I figure it is "velvet" for then I haven't many club duties anyway.

There are, of course, many other angles to be worked. For instance, most of my members employ a number of people. These employees usually buy the "boss" something for Christmas. I have made more than one sale running up to \$100 through this source.

I am strong for the Christmas Sales idea. I have had assistants argue that it seems useless to do all this extra work when we will sell them in Spring anyway. However, unfortunately, I do not know most of the members' non-golfing wives and it certainly gave me a headache to see the new bags, etc., in Spring that were Christmas presents I didn't sell.

"TRADE-INS PAY",

Member Service Policies
Build Market for
Spencer Murphy

SPENCER MURPHY, pro at Glen Oaks G. & C. C., Great Neck, L. I., made 1933 a highly successful year despite generally adverse conditions. Murphy attributes the greater part of his sales success this year to his "trade in allowance" policy which permitted members to turn in used sets of clubs in part payment for new sets.

Spencer, like other wise pros, applies this policy only after he has made rather definite arrangements to sell any sets accepted in trade-ins and has been able to make all-around satisfactory appraisals of the sets offered as allowances.

COULD YOU USE AN EXTRA HUNDRED DOLLARS?

No, we are not running a correspondence school—we are not going to try to tell you just how you can become a financial success. We don't know whether you would make a success as a moving picture scenario writer and we don't care, but we do know this—that there has been a keen and intense interest in a number of golf items which Wilson has brought out at the tail end of the season: Ogg-mented irons, Ogg-mented woods, flexible shafts and the already famous thin-cover Hol-Hi golf ball.

We know this interest is at white heat. We also know that last year with items of lesser acceptance, many professionals through direct mail campaigns, personal telephone calls and even in some cases house to house solicitations of their members, found a very ready market for additional sales at Christmas time.

We suggest that it would be a smart idea for you to hook up this idea with this ready acceptance of the new Wilson items and cash in on it to your own profit this Christmas. We will help you in any way possible. If you want Wilson to assist you in arranging a special letter, just say the word. If you want to hear how some of the boys succeeded last year and what their methods were, we'll slip you the dope on request.

The whole thing is a natural. Why don't you nail it by making arrangements at once?

Wilson-Western Sporting Goods Co.

New York—Chicago—Los Angeles—San Francisco—Detroit
Portland, Ore.—Minneapolis—St. Paul—Kansas City
St. Louis—Des Moines—Cincinnati—Pittsburgh—Miami
Charlotte, N. C.—Houston—Dallas

We Have a Definite Plan for You—
Why Don't You Nail It Today?

WILSON-WESTERN SPORTING GOODS CO.

2037 Powell Ave., Dept. 2, Chicago, Ill.

Please send me by return mail the Ogg-mented Christmas Sales Plan and tell me how to work it.

Name-----

Club-----

Address-----

City-----