

SIMPLE BUT SOUND

By CARL HORN

Fred Dinger, Agawam Pro, Has No Complex Shop Policies to Confuse His Members

THE PRO who has been able to keep business good during the last two trying years is the fellow who is set in good shape for the return of something approaching normal business conditions. By this dope Fred Dinger, pro at Agawam Hunt, Providence, R. I., is set for a great year.

Fred is started right for business, because his shop is situated at the first tee and each member goes through his shop before playing. But that fortunate circumstance isn't enough to account by itself for the business Dinger has been doing. He is a thoughtful, active worker and makes it easy for his members to buy.

One of the biggest aids to good business he has used during the last two years is the trade-in plan. By keeping a close watch on members' bags and noting when the member apparently is attracted by some clubs in the attractive shop at Agawam, Dinger knows just when it is advisable to begin some subtle selling work. Say a member has his eye on a set of irons that retail for \$75. Perhaps he is wondering whether it would be wise to spend the money for this set, or for some other reason is undecided. Dinger casually volunteers an offer on the prospective member's old clubs as a trade-in. "Nine times out of ten," said Fred, "the member is more than delighted and buys promptly."

The Trade-In Market

It is Dinger's observation that there is a surprisingly large number of public course players who would sooner have a used club of fine design, workmanship and materials at \$3 than to pay \$2 or \$3 for a new club of decidedly inferior material. Dinger says that many of the municipal course players are former caddies who know a good golf club when they get their hands on one.

It is Dinger's opinion that the present lively increase in the number of new players is providing a great outlet for pro trade-in clubs at prices enabling the pro to do a highly profitable volume of business with members who have been holding off buying. It means some more work, of course, Dinger says, but no one ought to

have a complaint about more work these days if more money can be made.

Dinger figures that the proper placing of these trade-in clubs is doing a pretty fair job of making the territory a better one for quality merchandise.

Fred's policy on stocking is to carry a good stock of high-class merchandise with not much of any item but a representative and broad variety. He makes it a point to order a set of woods to go with each set of iron clubs he sells, because he has found that when a fellow likes a new set of irons well enough to buy them, selling him the companion set of woods is not much more than a formality.

In one corner of his shop is a display of "specials." Here he has odd clubs such as wedges and other special clubs and putters. There is a putting green just outside the door of the shop and Dinger encourages members to try out any of the putters in the "special" stock. Any other of the "odd" clubs may be tried out during a round. The trial business has made a lot of sales at Agawam.

"Satisfaction Guaranteed"

Dinger doesn't confine his policy of "satisfaction in play" to these clubs from the special stock. He carries at all times a large selection of balls ranging from 25c to \$1 in price. If a member feels that the ball hasn't stood the gaff as it should, according to its price and specifications, he cheerfully replaces it. If there's anything really wrong with the ball he says that the manufacturers have shown a willingness to make good, but if the ball is O.K. and the fault is the member's, Dinger just as cheerfully makes the replacement and keeps his mouth shut. This policy has given him such complete control over Agawam members' ball business that the cut-price ball sales seldom register any effect on his people.

The point that Dinger makes in this connection is that pros sometimes forget to place due emphasis on the feature that they have exclusively—that of providing the merchandise right at the point of use and allowing tests or promptly making adjustments in case of unsatisfactory merchandise. In his opinion, the pros, by mak-



nois the PGA sectional stars have agreed to give lectures and demonstrations without cost to the schools or pupils to get the idea started.

George Jacobus and Joe Williams, noted sports columnist of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, have been conferring on a plan to put golf instruction in New York and New Jersey schools. Jacobus recently had a yarn in the athletic Coach Magazine, giving the coaches a close-up on the golf promotion ideas of the pros and inviting co-operation.

Says Ball-Rack Works Fine for Him as First Tee Starter

AS a further suggestion to "J. L." of Oregon, who asked GOLFDOM for a practical fee-course starting system, Peter J. Raklets of Youngstown, O., votes for the ball-rack. He writes:

"I have tried the ball-rack system and have found it very successful. My starter is stationed at the tee on week-ends and holidays, when play is heavy. I instruct my cashier to tell the players to give their ball, which should be marked with initials or in some other way for identification, to the starter. He places the ball in the upper end of the rack.

"When he wants to call players to the tee, he takes a ball from the lower end of the rack and calls out the make of ball or the initials. If the player does not respond to the call, he puts the ball on the ground alongside the rack until claimed.

"The system has worked so well that during week-day play, when there is no reason to do so, players get in the habit of dropping a ball in the rack to keep track of their starting order."

New England PGA "Get Together" In Boston, April 15

SECOND annual "Get Together" of the New England PGA will be held at Hotel Somerset, Boston, April 15 at 6:30.

Manufacturers will show their 1935 lines to the pros and there will be a business session and dinner. First time the idea was tried it went over great. The boys got a chance to do some extensive shopping and the manufacturers were able to display complete lines. Time and money was saved for all concerned.

Comparisons and discussion of business plans for the year will be made by the pros at the meeting. It's a stunt worthy of adoption by all other PGA sections.

ing more of a concerted selling drive around this point, would vastly increase their percentage of the total golf business.

During the last three years Dinger has kept his lesson business in good shape by use of a lesson card giving the pupil five hours of lessons at a cost of \$12. His rate is \$3 an hour, so the buyer of the card saves \$3. The card proposition not only has kept him busy, but by encouraging the members to take a series of lessons he is enabled to show them improved games. This is advertising that helps him to sell more lessons. The tickets frequently are purchased as birthday and holiday presents.

None of the things that Dinger has done to make his business operations profitable, and attractive to his members, are complex. They are just the simple things, well and cheerfully done. He is a great advocate of doing the simple thing, promptly and ably, in a genuine spirit of service to the members. When you boil down his policy it merely is "Do it simply. Do it right. BUT DO IT!"

SECTIONAL and national PGA plans to push golf instruction in schools are high spots of early season work. In Illi-