



This past season has seen great improvement in pro-shop appearance. Typical is Neil McIntyre's layout at Highland G&CC, Indianapolis, shown here.

## PROS COMMAND '35 MARKET

By HERB GRAFFIS

**R**EVIEWING the pro situation during the 1935 season and presenting constructive expressions from leaders of pro thought, GOLFDOM considers that pro golf has reason to boast about the manner in which it has come through the slump and qualified itself for leadership in the game's business development.

In surveying the pro business field, the Pacific Coast stands out as the sector where the battle for survival has been a bitter, brutal one. Reason for the acute distress in coast golf merchandising has been dumping of excess stocks, say pros. This dumping into a market of dwindled absorption worked costly injury on store outlets as well as on pros.

Walter Pursey, Inglewood CC (Seattle) pro tells of valiant efforts to sell pro quality merchandise by the time-payment plan. That and a patient effort to educate members to the value of pro advisory service in buying, have been mainstays of Seattle section pros during discouraging times of membership slump and cut-price competition, chiefly from drug and hardware stores. Regulation sports goods outlets join with pros around there in deploring that outlets with only side-line interest in golf merchandising have been permitted to

sell in a way that has made manufacturers' standard prices a joke.

Pursey relates that responsible pros in his section have pooled their resources to buy balls in quantities sufficient to prevent the balls being thrown on the market at ruinous prices by trunk stores, radio dealers and other temporary outlets. Pros figure they have done more than any other factor in attempting to stabilize golf goods business in that part of the country and figure that if it hadn't been for pro effort the legitimate manufacturers eventually would be selling for less than cost in the northwest Pacific coast.

Club official and member interest and co-operation in pro business affairs have lagged behind that which is so brightly evident in other parts of the country where club financial and membership improvement has been marked. Pursey remarks: "Some pros have told me they'd drop dead if their club officials and members ever

asked how they were getting along and volunteer help or advice of any sort."

Dewey Longworth, widely known pro at Claremont CC (Oakland, Calif.) says that the best thing pros have done lately is to make amateur golf more enjoyable by making instruction simpler and more effective. Movie instruction has aided pros in this work, he comments.

He adds: "The more knowledge players have of the game, the more they will demand the best in golf equipment and when they want the best they buy from a professional. It is my opinion the pro will increase his business, his prestige and his usefulness when he teaches the public to play better."

Longworth fights the club dumping problem by pushing to his members his bench-made woods with whip, grip and swinging weight fitted to the individual, and ties together his instruction and club selling.

By making the PGA membership in 1936 as nearly 100% as possible in each section Longworth is confident many present unhealthy practices in golf merchandising can be eliminated and the game be promoted by a pro organization so strong and competent that amateur associations and the general golfing public will rate it as a major constructive element of the game.

### Thoughtfulness in Member Service

Successful pros everywhere have acquired the habit of attending to every little detail in advancing interests of their players and themselves. A comprehensive but brief statement of sound pro policy and a brilliant example of thoughtfulness in member contact, comes from Harold Sampson, pro at Burlingame (Calif.) CC.

Says Sampson:

"Cases where play and business have increased through the activities of the pro have been, as with myself, results of a conscientious and continued effort to give as much service as possible. This has included dressing up the shop; giving the patron good equipment at the least cost; helping as much as possible aside from his regular instructions, without charge, to keep up member interest and keep down member cost so it will not become prohibitive; helping the women and juniors likewise; and doing everything possible to keep golf in their minds and hold their interest. This I think about covers the professionals' work.

"Of course the individual will have to figure out the problem as it applies to his particular case. But in any case, the wise pro will try to keep down the cost for the player. If the pro watches his buying, he can give his customers good merchandise and save him considerable money without loss of revenue to himself.

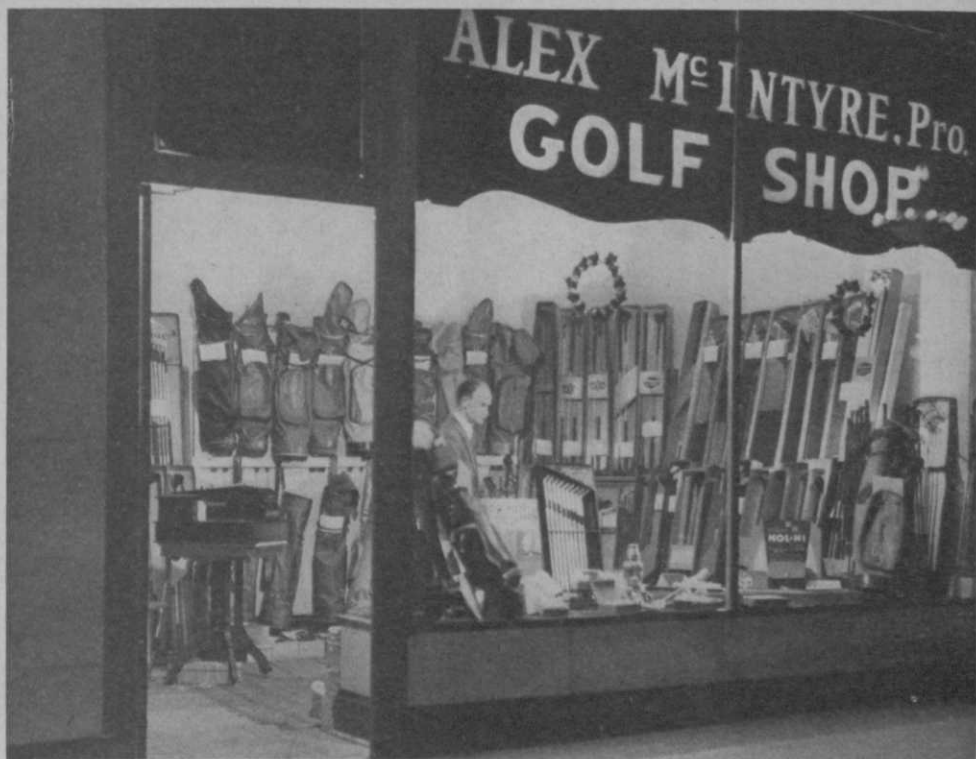
"The only thing I can think of as applying to myself that may be considered unusual and helpful, is that when I see an article or illustration in a magazine that brings out a certain point which I feel will enlighten and help a player, I cut it out and mail it to the party. In this way I not only keep up his interest, but keep him working along the right channels, instead of having his attention diverted to something that does not apply to his particular case."

### PGA Heads Are Praised

Jacobus, Mackie, Treacy and other national officials of the PGA are lauded in many pro statements to GOLFDOM for the PGA work in getting golf merchandising on an even keel. This is delicate, mystifying and exacting work. One of the numerous instances of this labor bobbed up at Kansas City where PGA co-operation in settling the matter is referred to by Al Collins, business man pro at Indian Hills.

Collins tells of getting a square break for pros in the endless fight with chain drug stores. A manufacturer earnestly interested in protecting his brand against price structure destruction put code marks on each box of balls. When this standard brand was advertised at a cut price, the code number tipped off the balls' source and made action clear. The same manufacturer authorized pros to buy up all the standard balls offered for sale at the cut price and on presentation of the pros' receipts refunds were made. Because the Kansas City pros persistently shopped the cut-price stores this standard brand was in little evidence at the sales. Collins believes the moral of this incident is that unfair chain-store competition can be eliminated if the pros cooperate with real work instead of complaints.

Collins has observed through the mid-continent a great improvement in pro merchandising ability and work. He says most of the smart boys are working on the basis that every additional item the pros can service to the members at even a slight profit, gets the members more in the habit of buying at the pro shop.



Alex B. McIntyre, pro at the Edison CC, rented a small store in Schenectady, N. Y. around the holiday season, and turned into a profit the stock that pro shops usually carry over the winter. Alex did that and more—he sold through the store more than five times the holiday volume he used to do by an active solicitation of Christmas business without store facilities. He picked up a small vacant store on a short lease. It cost him little for rent and overhead, so he made a fine profit.

The major problem of pro merchandising in 1936, guesses Al, will be to maintain the pro ball business. He is afraid there will be some murderous price-slashing on off-brand balls. For the past few years, he remarks, he has carried a line of his own private brand balls as a defense measure—but has wanted to discontinue this as soon as the ball situation cleared up. Now he is hesitating to toss away this private brand business of his own without strong assurance of protection.

Membership at clubs in the "Heart of America" territory has shown a fine improvement. Collins says club officials and pros are optimistic about 1936 prospects.

Collins delivers himself of a gem worthy of thought by businessmen generally when he remarks: "When the pros quit talking about their troubles so much and worked on them more and when they quit blaming everyone else and examined themselves for the possibilities of error, then the pros began to take command of golf merchandising."

Encouragement of competition has been one of the highly effective factors in pro development of golf during 1935. Dan Goss, Highland Park GC (Birmingham, Ala.) reports that Birmingham's leading pros clubbed together and bought an attractive trophy for which teams in a civic club golf league compete. Much publicity and goodwill followed this pro action. Goss cites the case as a reminder that pros in other communities could increase golf interest by presentation of trophies for local amateur affairs in which big fields would play throughout a season.

Matt Jans, Berrien Hill CC (Benton Harbor, Mich.) subscribes heartily to more member competitive events as a stimulator of business. "Work with your tournament committee. You'll have more golf interest and sell many prizes," Jans advised pros who want to miss no bets. He figures his lively weekly blind bogey events had a direct effect in making his 1935 lesson business exceed his combined lessons for 1933 and 1934. On blind bogey

events alone Matt sold 60 dozen balls this season. "It gets them in the habit of playing with good golf balls," Matt says. Any entrant whose score is out of the range of the blind bogey event has his money segregated and when there is enough in this pot he has a drawing for a set of clubs. That consolation affair is a smart way of keeping everyone happy.

Jans also has been giving free instructions at Benton Harbor and St. Joe high schools. He is sure that this work in building a big future business for the pros not only insures the future of the game but eventually will result in paid school instruction jobs during fall, winter and early spring months, periods that now are dismal for pro income.

### Classes Still Business Builders

Ralph Stonehouse, one of those fine young men responsible for the future of pro golf, is another who is devoting much effort to group classes. Ralph is at a fee course in a small Indiana city where some might get discouraged and loaf, bellyaching about their lousy luck.

But he has worked up classes of as high as 50 youngsters. Many individual lessons have come out of his classes. He has sold lots of trade-in clubs to these kids, thus confirming GOLFDOM's suggestion that a deal between the manufacturers and PGA for taking trade-in clubs would spur new club business and further the kid golf development.

Stonehouse, like other pros, has found that one of the most profitable moves of the 1935 season was originating and conducting competitions that maintain keen interest among players.

Standing out among 1935 pro developments was the increase in lessons. A number of factors promoted this. Probably the publicity given the PGA uniform instruction idea helped, although the pros never have been able to agree on what constitutes instruction elementals. The Lawson Little newspaper interviews on his instruction by Tommy Armour also had some effect in building the reputation for first class pro instruction. Pros themselves went after instruction business stronger.

Guy Paulsen, competent young pro at the Longmeadow (Mass.) CC, worked a lesson course plan that sold 85 series of lessons. He advertised his plan with the slogan: "One lesson more may make your score less than before." He sold a series

of four regular lessons (regularly at \$1.50 each per half hour) and one playing lesson of approximately 1½ hours, for \$7.50. The series lessons got Guy playing with more members and the results of the course of lessons were better than trying to crowd a great improvement into an hour or two.

Lewis Myers, president of the New England PGA, sees pro golf coming out of the depression in good shape. Myers strongly advocates that pros broaden their views and knowledge of the games business problems.

His statement to GOLFDOM follows:

"Progress has been made by having better men qualified to call themselves golf professionals, men who have the ability to promote and sell the game of golf.

"Get together" dinners in various sections of the country whereby closer co-operation between amateur and professional association have brought a better understanding of problems of vital interest. Manufacturers, greenkeepers, stewards, salesmen, club and association presidents are brought together and clearer vision and confidence during these trying times is established.

"New England, with horse and dog racing to combat, has gone ahead on the whole 25% over the preceding year from a playing and business standpoint; 1936 should see a bigger year. More women and children are playing golf. Every member of the New England PGA is a fully paid-up member, and is 100% in standing. Pro credit rating is high and is improving every year.

### Public Links Are Club Nurseries

"Various state golf associations should take a keener interest in public links golf. Public links golf courses should employ PGA pros to educate the coming generation of golfers. There are marvellous prospects for private clubs to fill up their memberships from public links golfers. In every locality there are golfers playing public courses who measure up to all requirements of the private clubs. Private clubs lack co-operation. Membership lists should be exchanged, and prospect lists should be built up. This is one problem for the state associations to thrash out, and try to help the weak. Public links golf is getting better and bigger."

J. M. Anderson, president of the Michigan PGA, in looking ahead from the experience of the 1935 season believes that

the pros have been doing well in getting the pro house in order. How the pro merchandising situation will work out in 1936 depends on how well the manufacturers keep agreements among themselves. Anderson warms up on this subject and maintains that if it were not for the pros there probably wouldn't be 75c golf balls or high grade factory-made clubs, affording the manufacturers a profit to keep them in business. On this account Jim is vehement in stating that the manufacturers, for their own preservation, need to stick together faithfully in exercising control over hit-and-run outlets. This is beside the consideration due pros for their job of steadily and expertly serving the golfing public in a way that gives both the public and the manufacturer a fair, profitable deal.

#### Thinks Subsidies Are Delicate Problems

Anderson also expresses the strong belief that subsidized players have a very delicate job of balancing their responsibilities between the firms that pay them and the clubs that hire them. Lack of thorough qualification as a club pro and forcing of shop lines contrary to members' wishes and valid requirements, Jim states, may bring about a drastic and possibly unpleasant revision of the present long-established subsidy basis.

Horton Smith, president of the Illinois PGA and one of the most widely known of all leading pro businessmen and players, reviews the 1935 season and makes hopeful forecasts in a statement worth pro study. Says Horton:

"The greatest service given to the game recently by professionals is the general improvement and education of the pro himself. This makes it possible for the pro to do many many things which will benefit the game of golf and all who play it. I think, in a few years, the professionals will be so well trained and educated that they will add a definite snap to the game in ways other than playing. With improved economic conditions the pro will be in a better position to do the extra things that lead to better and enjoyable golf for amateurs.

"Promotion of junior golf among the girls and boys is the most progressive and vital work ever done by the professionals and the PGA. This plan should be developed much more extensively.

"The pro will become more valuable than ever before if the clubs will give

him encouragement and a free hand to act. The pro is definitely becoming more efficient in all phases of his profession. Every pro should make everything concerned with golf at his club, his business and try to see that it is improved if possible.

"Allowing club members to take new clubs out to the practice tee for a few trial shots is a fine service and a great boon to increased sales. Of course this must be carried on with reasonable care. The pro must become a golf specialist and give assistance to the club and take an active interest in every detail of the game. Simplified teaching is still something that must be more perfectly accomplished.

#### Merchandising Remains Complex

"Merchandising is the greatest problem for the pro. I think he is doing the best job ever but conditions seem very difficult along this line. I hope the pro will get a break, as he is the most sincere lover of the game and will do all possible to make the game better in every respect.

"With the return of improved times, I have confidence that the pro will give greatest service in seeing that every need and wish of his golfers and his club is taken care of. This would include having in stock all items essential to more enjoyable golf and plenty of personal service.

"I have great confidence in the future of this grand game of golf and am looking forward with the keenest anticipation to: more golfers of all types; close and very pleasant relations between amateurs and professionals, both as individuals and through their organizations; a great improvement in the general standard of play, especially among the amateurs and women; a definite improvement in championship arrangements and press accounts of the game; and a definite realization that the pro in general in one of the most sincere and unselfish supporters of the game."

#### Trade-Ins Hold Profit Key

With the prospect of many beginners coming into the game as a result of the pro school-kid classes and municipal recreation group instruction, the market for trade-in clubs begins to look like it gives pros a good chance to control the new market right at the start.

Alex B. McIntyre, pro at Edison club,



(Rexford, N. Y.) has made great use of the trade-in idea during the last two seasons. McIntyre is a real merchant. If you doubt it you should see the downtown golf store he operates in the winter. He does plenty of Christmas golf gift business at this establishment.

On the trade-in deals Alex says:

"When the member trades in an old set for an allowance, he is encouraged to buy by the conviction he is getting a fine, modern set at a very low net price.

"Beginners don't know what to get—and many times the pro doesn't know what to supply them because he wants to see their swings develop. I always have second hand sets on hand and advise beginners to get a good set cheap to start with. After they've played with them for a while the beginners and I know what they want and they have confidence in me that brings me their business. This is a real business asset for the pro who is looking to his future profits.

"In making my business good during the depression I have found that a large, well selected stock is a great help. Members are always interested in clubs whether they have good sets or not. They are continually handling sets in my shop and this creates talk and an urge to buy.

"The public is always looking for something new and I have learned that it pays me to beat anyone else to the display of the meritorious new golf merchandise."

Earl Fry, able pro of the Alameda (Calif.) CC, says 1935 emphasized the value of instruction as the basis of good business for pros. "The more people playing my course, the greater my gross sales. I believe that golf interest languishes when people aren't able to play a passable game. Therefore the best thing pros can do is to help golfers to hit the ball.

"Simplified instruction easily stood out this year as the keynote of pro prosperity."

### CPA Writes New Volume on Operating Economies

CLUB ECONOMIES. By Archie F. Reeve, CPA., Cleveland Pub. Co., 90 Broad St., New York City. 144 pages. Price, \$3.00. Subtitle of this pioneer book on club managerial work is "Suggestions for membership clubs and how to operate within their budgets." Although the book is written from the city club angle and only sketchily treats of the problems peculiar to golf clubs, it's a book well

### ATTENTION, PROS!

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worth study by golf club managers, officials and other department heads who desire to broaden their knowledge of club management.

Naturally the author, as an accountant, stresses the accounting phases of club operation but handles the major details of operating in a sound and fairly comprehensive manner.

Reeve counsels club officials: "The club manager should be even a better man than one you would get for your personal business because he has to be left alone most of the time, and is not, as a rule, available for daily consultation as a man in your office would be."

Chapter headings are: Elements of club organization; Administrative; Service Departments; Maintenance—Housekeeping and Engineering Dept.; Concerning Employees; and General (which is mostly on club rules and regulations.) Charts and forms and their analysis conclude the book.

This book gives a clear, helpful picture of the many complex and onerous responsibilities of city club operations in such a way that it serves golf clubs by handling problems all clubs have in common. GOLFDOM recommends it to all students of club operation and hopes that the Reeve book will encourage the early preparation of a manual that will deal more extensively with the special problems of golf club operation.

Club Economies may be obtained from GOLFDOM'S Book Dept., or from the book's publishers.

### Wisconsin-Illinois Greensmen Hold Joint Meet

SIXTY greenkeepers from Wisconsin and Illinois met at the annual joint meeting of the two station associations which was held Sept. 9 at McHenry (Ill.) CC.

After an afternoon of golf, a dinner meeting with C. A. Tregillus presiding, featured a question box. Questions were submitted unsigned. Lively and broad discussion handled the questions. Representative greenkeepers of both states gave helpful details of maintenance problems they solved during the 1935 season.