



Paul rings the bells on the cash register by making his shop at Torrington look like a good place to buy.

## OUT-SMARTS PRICE-SLASHERS

By ROBERT N. PRYOR

**P**ERSONABLE, enterprising Paul Bell, pro at the Torrington Country Club, Torrington, Conn., is a firm believer in that old merchandising slogan "You have to have the merchandise in order to be able to sell it." All you have to do is look over Paul's Shop to realize how large a stock he carries, which in turn suggests a sizeable sales volume.

When Bell took over the Torrington post last spring the pro shop consisted of one medium-sized room which was used for a salesroom, club storage and repair room. His first move was to separate the "pro shop" from the repair room. He curtained off the display floor and turned it into a compact and attractive salesroom which helped to concentrate the member's attention on his display of merchandise.

Then he set about arranging shelves on all the wall space. Here on these shelves and all the available wall space, he not only advantageously placed all the latest in good equipment but he stocked all the accessories, wearing apparel and conveniences that go to make up a successful golf game.

On one shelf is displayed a large as-

sortment of golf shoes. On another is stocked the very latest in hats and caps. Still another is used for locker-room necessities. And on another can be found such incidentals as shoe laces, belts, club head covers, handkerchiefs and other odds and ends.

One section of the shop is used to display left-handed equipment. Here in this corner reserved solely for southpaws, is the latest in woods, irons and even gloves. All add to the cost of his overhead and the expense of his shop but Paul likes to have something in stock when a member asks for it. He looks upon this service as one of the reasons for the club hiring him.

Another section is devoted to women's equipment. Here can be found the latest in matched irons and woods for the weaker sex along with other equipment and acces-

sories manufactured expressly for milady.

Covering the lower wall space around the room is the regular stock of ten sets of irons and ten sets of woods. Because of the large stock and the comparatively small space for display, it was necessary to suspend golf bags from the ceiling rafters, making a very attractive display. Something like twenty-five bags are kept in stock, including sunday, canvas and leather bags, with prices to fit every purse.

A complete line of celanese, wash rag and cotton sport shirts are also kept in stock as well as sweaters and sweat shirts. This merchandise is made by a nationally known sport house and his prices on them are the same as those advertised throughout the country. In golf hose and anklets, a complete range of sizes and colors is kept and Bell takes great pride in the fact that up until August 15 he had not lost a sale because he could not fit a prospective customer. This also held good on the sales of golf gloves.

#### No Worries Over Gyp Sales

As for cut-rate competition Bell never worries about what is happening "down town." First of all, he places a season's guarantee on all merchandise purchased in his shop. All golf balls are sold at a ten per cent reduction when purchased in dozen lots. All golf bags and shag bags are lettered free of charge and when he is able to pick up a special or a "close-out" he passes the saving right on to the member with a special sale. He keeps his patronage because he is forever on the lookout for special "buys" for his members and he keeps them coming back into his shop for they are always sure he has "something to sell." He has that kind of a reputation for being a good merchant.

Cut rate competition to him isn't much of a problem because he feels that with his lack of overhead he can sell his merchandise as cheap as the town stores—and have the advantage of selling standard brands of equipment which only the pros handle. He operates on the theory that in golf, like anything else, a pro can stock a cheap grade, a medium grade and a high priced line of goods. He keeps his shop stocked with a good representation of all quality merchandise but especially stressing the moderately priced goods.

In the irons he has sets priced as low as \$9.50. Some of his wood sets go as high as \$48. In golf balls his price range is from six, five, four, three and two for a dollar to seventy-five and a dollar golf

balls. He carries a variety of stock to meet every purse. They can get what they "need" from him and that's his answer to store competition.

To use Bell's very words he doesn't "believe that merchandise can be sold from a book."

"The prospective customer wants to be able to swing a club, finger a sport shirt, or look over a golf bag before he buys it. I think that if the pros would make the pro shop a place where the member could outfit himself completely with golfer's equipment, he would find that he would be many dollars ahead at the end of the season" says Bell, who was selected from a list of more than a hundred applicants last spring. Before going to Torrington he was pro at the Pines Bridge Country Club at Ossining, N. Y.

To keep abreast of the times, competition and customer demand, Bell is constantly on the look out for golf novelties, such as cane seats, spike rubbers, ash trays with the golf motif, and umbrellas. He makes an effort to keep the shelves filled with interesting merchandise so that the members will come in and browse around for the latest in the golf line. By this method they become frequenters of his shop. In many cases he is able to make a sale when the member intended only to drop in and "see what Paul has new."

#### Traffic Brings Sales

He tries to create as much activity in his shop as possible. Whether it be a "close-out," a new set of the latest matched irons, or novelties, he makes a real determined effort to make his shop the headquarters of the club either before or after the game.

His bulletin board in the shop is an example of this. All announcements, tournament results and special events are posted there and the members gather around to discuss the game and the results. "This increased traffic through the pro shop means increased sales" says Paul.

Looking back over a highly exciting season Bell believes that his arranging of the shelves into sections, making a special department for the feminine golfers, and heavily stocking his shop with merchandise so as to convey to the members his confidence in his new job, has brought him many more customers than he would have had if he hadn't shown that extra interest, that extra effort, that extra enterprise.

"You have to have the merchandise to sell it" says this Torrington pro.