



THEY LIKE TO BUY FROM MADISON

By D. SCOTT CHISHOLM

WHEN a friend of mine, Roy Kamrar, told me about a Les Madison, a young professional golfer who sends a pamphlet to all his members every month of the year expounding the virtues of his merchandise and telling about his own skill as instructor, I felt I must investigate and report the activities of such an ultra-progressive to headquarters. I concluded that this young man must be the sort of a chap that the others of his profession should hear about.

Some eight years ago I believed I'd discovered the master golf salesman when I ran across Arthur Clarkson, at that time connected with the then prosperous Rancho club of Los Angeles. But that was eight years ago. At that time, be it recalled, Clarkson was tops in golf professional salesmanship and in an article dwelling on his prosperous reign which appeared in *GOLFDOM* around 1928 I believe, I told of how he sold ten sets of clubs and bags to one motion picture director at the healthy figure of \$177 per set. His total sale and check (delivered on the spot, mind you) came to \$1,770.

Few, if any, such sales are concluded today.

Personal Letters Pay

I found Les Madison in his very attractive shop at the Hollywood CC, about 5 miles or so from the heart of Hollywood, if that hamlet has any heart left. I found this modern Selfridge writing a note to one of his members drawing to his attention a new model of a driver that has just been received from the east. Part of this letter read: "I want you to have the very first club of this design hereabouts because you are a fashion leader and know the value of really fine merchandise and when

the other members see what you are using off the tee, I feel they will get curious."

That simple yet very enticing paragraph told me I had met the salesman superlative. Instead of sitting around his shop waiting for customers, he employed his time writing personal merchandising tips to those of his members who bought most freely from his stock.

At the outset let me tell you that Les Madison is in his early twenties and came to Hollywood from the arid deserts of Arizona some two years ago after serving his apprenticeship under the capable tuition of Lew Scott, one of the Carnoustie Scots. He is a very active member of the PGA and never fails to attend all its meetings in his own section. He plays a sound game of golf and although he has no crowns to his name at this moment, he is quite capable of winning high sectional honors in the very near future. From what I can find out about Madison, he is an excellent instructor and exceedingly popular with his entire membership. The ladies are all with him and can be numbered among his most loyal customers both in his shop and in the matter of lessons.

Les Says These Sell

I got hold of Les by the shoulders and marched him off to a corner of his private office and I present to you herewith, without any embellishment or fraudulent representations, some of his thought on 12 points that feature modern salesmanship

and management in a golf shop of today:

COURTESY by those of your staff to all members—no matter who they may be—is the foremost virtue, reached only by a rigorous training. No matter what the member desires, serve him to the utmost and he will in turn repay you for such courtesies by patronizing your shop when in need of clubs and other equipment. Never say "It can't be done," even if it can't.

APPRECIATION is a fine thing to find in a salesman because it endears him to his customer. Try to make each of your club members feel as if they themselves are salesmen for your shop. Make them feel they are helping you out tremendously (which they really are) if they help you sell their relatives and friends around the club some little item they need. This confidence is best won by your members having appreciation in the party of the second part—the salesman.

Neat Shop Brings Visits

CLEANLINESS is, as we all know, next to godliness. And that goes a mighty long way when applied to the pro shop. Your shop and your merchandise **MUST** be as clean as a whistle. Let no dust, loose papers or twine lie around. Many members of my club loaf around my shop just to listen to the conversation.

For your members to loaf around and talk, you must have a clean place for them to loaf. I like to have them in my shop as they are the type of members who tell their fellow members about some new gadget or some new club or bag just received by you from the east. Mind you, I make it a point to try to sell them also. Keep people around and you are bound to make sales.

PUNCTUALITY is the very life of a golf professional's success insofar as keeping instruction appointments are concerned. I see to it that I am a minute or two ahead of my appointed time so my member can have no complaint on that score. A minute or two doesn't mean much just so you are that much ahead of time—but a minute or two late may mean serious consequences.

Do not play with anyone on Saturdays, Sundays or holidays. Be found in your shop at such times, ready to pick up any sales that are around. These are the only

times you ever get to see a great number of your members—and their friends. They are all potential customers and you really must not miss a single one—if you would make your shop pay.

BUYING merchandise in which you have no enthusiasm is a fatal mistake. Of course you must stock some things that are not of the best so as to meet the demand of all but at the same time you must be enthused yourself to some extent before you buy. You must have confidence in the quality of your merchandise if you are to succeed. And it is a good thing to keep your shop well stocked with fine looking clubs and equipment. An empty-appearing shop is an ill omen for good business and your members will be found going elsewhere for their requirements. But carry no trash. Your members will go downtown for trashy articles.

Keep Stock Fresh

OLD STOCK should be cleared out. I mean things over two years old that are showing shop wear. Sell them for a song. Turn them into cash. Take your loss and get new stock with the cash. Old stock costs you plenty in interest on your investment and ruins the appearance of your shop. Too many pros wait for members to order a set of clubs before they stock them. Have the clubs right there to cinch the "pronto" sale while the customer is hot. Many a good deal is lost forever by the pro saying that the clubs will be in tomorrow. Delay is more fatal than ever in present day salesmanship and that is why you will find my Hollywood shop stocked up to the limit.

PUBLICITY by the pro is to be sought rather than turned down and I make sure that I have in my bag the finest and latest set of clubs there is on the market. A journeyman is known by his tools. Have the best and have them polished up to the queen's taste. I feel the pro at a club should set an example and should use the finest of golf equipment he carries in stock. He should change his clubs from time to time as the manufacturers improve their models and thus keep up to date at all times. His clubs and shoes should be spotless every time he goes out on the first tee to play. There is no excuse for a pro appearing sloppy at any time. Look your finest at home and abroad and you'll receive the finest and most desirable pub-



Shop of Larry Nabholz at Lakewood CC, Dallas, Tex. This is one of the liveliest pro merchandising spots in the south. Lakewood has about 500 members, many of whom play the year around. Larry and his assistant, Bunny Plummer, select stocks, arrange displays and sell a real service station for Lakewood members.

licity. I look upon publicity of a favorable sort as a tremendous asset.

PLAY with the duffer sometimes as well as your low handicap member. I do so quite often and I find it pays me. Play up to members who are hard to please. They prove to be your best boosters once you win them over. And they are your worst knockers when they are not on your side. The good-behaving members take care of themselves as far as you are concerned. You take care of the tough ones and you will find it pays dividends. Make friends of all. Don't turn your head when a knocker comes your way. Go get him on your side—or at least do your best to do so.

The Sun Always Shines

BUSINESS is never bad as far as my conversation goes. Everything is fine and the goose hangs high. Your members like you to do well in your shop and you demand respect when you fail to kick or pass remarks about any members to the effect that they are a bunch of so-and-so's. That is the very worst thing a pro can do; such news travels far faster than any good remark you might have made.

REMEMBER that you cannot get cheap help to attend to your shop and deliver 100% service. It isn't in the cards. Pay your help good wages so they will be honest with you and with your customers, no matter what the temptations may be. If

you don't pay them well, they will get it some way and that way may cost you a great deal more than if you had them on good wages. Have them look up to you and respect you and that can be done by judicious training and respecting them. Train them in salesmanship and try to help them develop their personalities. It will mean money in your pocket and they will appreciate it. Kindness to your assistants is invaluable.

CADDIES can help the pro a lot in selling. They are good salesmen if they have confidence in you and think you are a regular fellow. Hand out a kindly word and give them a break whenever you can and you will be rewarded beyond measure. For two dollars I sold many a set of clubs for my old boss, Lew Scott. Caddies are just as human as you and I and they must be treated well if you are to gain their confidence and makes them your friends and boosters.

GOODWILL and sincere friendship among your members will create more sales than any individual effort you can put forth. As in all big businesses, remember your customer is always right. My members and customers are always right as far as I am concerned except when I run into a chisler. And, I am sorry to say, there are chislers in all golf clubs. But I thank God for the great majority of grand sportsmen and sportswomen that are today my customers at Hollywood. It is indeed a great privilege to serve them at all times.