

# LET'S HAVE A SALES PAR

By HORTON SMITH

**EVERY PRO** realizes that his own golf game would not amount to much if he didn't play against the score card. Shooting at par makes golf. But in the non-playing part of the pro's business he has no par as a pace-maker for his efforts. Consequently the merchandise and lesson sales suffer from lack of a pro sales par.

Pros, due to having to handle green-keeping duties at some clubs, are acquainted with the budget system whereby limits are set on the amounts to be spent for course maintenance. They realize that these budgets are founded on estimates of income. However there are very few pros who budget their own pro department operations and give themselves sales figures and operating economies to shoot at.

I have had, recently, an interesting experience that convinces me a pro business budget and an income par is something that every pro could adopt with profit and ease of mind. Before I started this winter's tournament circuit I made a careful estimate of probable expenses. I figured out that competition was going to be very tough. There are at least two dozen new or established better players who stand fine chances of finishing up at the top in any tournament; so my individual chances were not strong. Therefore I set for myself a prize money par of \$2,000 that would enable me to get out comfortably on expenses. Anything over that would be profit to me.

Fortunately I birdied my income par in the first few tournaments of the season and I have the notion that perhaps a reason why I started off so well was because I knew what my income par was and didn't have to press blindly.

## Set Par for Shop, Too

It struck me that I had been overlooking a good thing when I hadn't put in a par sales system in my shop. The average careful businessman pro keeps a fairly close comparison of sales by months during his season, and I did that. But it isn't enough.

Pro business is controlled by many uncertain factors. Weather may be bad.

General business may be bad—or so good members can't spare time to get out to the club. There may be a baseball team fighting for a pennant. There may be greens out of commission or some internal disturbance at the club. Still, the pro to make a living and progress has to overcome these adverse factors and increase his income.

The bad part of it is that the pro often doesn't know how hard he is being hit until the damage is done.

You don't have to check many records to learn a close connection exists between the number of rounds played and pro sales of merchandise and lessons. If these figures are not about parallel then the pro will be doing himself a good turn to think about his sales methods.

## Caddie Tickets Offer Information

Thinking along these lines I have come to the conclusion that one of the good business ideas a pro could put into action for 1936 is to get the figures on caddie tickets by months, or even by weeks (which would be better) for 1935 and set them up as a par for 1936.

If the pro gets these caddie ticket figures and makes up his mind that he is going to increase play 10% each month at his course during 1936 I believe that he will increase his net income far more than 10%. In the first place he will have the same fixed expenses as he had when he was doing a lesser volume of business and in the second place the mere fact of having a sales par will spur him to beat that par far more than 10%.

I have set 10% increase over last year as a figure that most pros can hit if they go right after it. Even if the weather is wet, play can be promoted by the pro playing himself and demonstrating smart and comfortable rain apparel that he has in his shop. There should be a shelter at the lesson tee of every first class club so

## FUTURE TOURNEYS

- Feb. 14, 15, 16—Thomasville, Ga. open, \$3,000.  
 Feb 20, 21, 22—St. Petersburg open, \$2,500.  
 Feb. 29-March 1—Bellevue-Biltmore open, Bel-leair, subscription.  
 March 3, 4, 5—Hollywood, Fla., \$2,500.  
 March 8, 9, 10, 11—Fourball, Miami (invitation), \$4,000.  
 March 11, 12, 13, 14, 15—Amateur-professional match play, St. Augustine, \$3,000.  
 March 18, 19, 20, 21—Tournament of the Gardens, Charleston, S. C., \$3,500.  
 March 24, 25, 26—North and South open, Pinehurst, \$4,000.  
 April 2, 3, 4, 5—Master's open, Augusta (invitation), \$5,000.  
 April 28—Entries close, National Open.  
 May 11—Qualifying rounds, National Open.  
 June 4, 5, 6—National Open, Baltusrol GC, Short Hills, N. J.  
 Aug. 12—Entries close, National amateur.  
 Aug. 25—Qualifying rounds, National amateur.  
 Sept. 2, 3—Walker Cup matches, Pine Valley GC, Clementon, N. J.  
 Sept. 14-19—National amateur, Garden City (N. Y.) GC.  
 Sept. 28-Oct. 3—Women's National, Canoe Brook CC, Summit, N. J.

that lessons can be pleasant despite rain or burning sun and I suggest that pros look into this while the club is making its usual spring improvements.

In some instances it might be a good idea to offer a reduction on lessons if taken in unbooked time on rainy days, but I am offering that only as a suggestion, inasmuch as the idea only recently occurred to me and I haven't had any actual experience along that line.

An interesting schedule of club events, personal encouragement by the pro, placing of the tee-plates and holes—on Saturdays especially—in spots that don't discourage the duffer, are a few of the things that I have found increase play at a club.

The main idea is to get a par for your sales but if you first get a par that you have to beat on the number of rounds played per week at your club you are pretty sure to do better than you might do trying to make pro profits on a hit-or-miss basis.

**VINNIE RICHARDS**, head of Dunlop sports division, recently was made a deputy sheriff of Westchester County, N. Y. It will be a dare-devil desperado who spits on the sidewalks, or parks without lights in Westchester County while law enforcement is entrusted to Richards.

**EARL RUBY**, sports writer of the Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal, and Courtney Noe, enterprising young pro at Cherokee, Louisville muny course, have started one of the most interesting instruction ideas in golf.

Ten local dubs are to practice two hours a day, six days a week from Dec. 4, 1935, until June 1, 1936, on which date Earl and Court declare the ten specimens will be shooting par golf. Earl is writing sport page stuff on the class work during the schedule and making it a feature that's attracting considerable attention.

Noe has a lot to gain if his students make good and Earl has a fine feature in his idea, so the tie-up is one which pros and sport-writers elsewhere can use to advantage.

Among members of the class now are a clergyman, a transmission man, an architect, an engraver, an insurance man, a hardware salesman, a postal clerk and the sports writer, Ruby. With Lawson Little turning newspaper man maybe, Ruby has an ambition of graduating from Noe's class as a National Amateur champion just to keep things balanced.

**T**OURNAMENT bureau statistics compiled by Bob Harlow for 1935 show that the tourney players' prize money slumped far less during the depression than did golf playing equipment sales. The 1935 prizes were off less than 20% from the tournament bureau's best year.

The \$135,000 prize money if divided evenly among the 227 pros who played in the 1935 tournaments would have meant \$594.71 to each of the pros.

Revolta led in the number of tournaments played. He figured in 34 tournaments to lead the field in prize winnings with \$9,543, which made his golf (estimating his strokes in match play) bring him \$1.17 a stroke. Picard with \$8,417 for 30 tournaments was second; Horton Smith with \$7,790 in 26 tournaments was third; Harry Cooper with \$7,132 for 24 events was fourth; Ky Laffoon, Radix cup winner for lowest medal average for the year, with \$6,185 for 22 events, fifth; Paul Runyan, was sixth with \$5,498 for 21 tournaments. There were 23 boys who won \$2,000 or more, and 17 others who won \$1,000 or more during the 1935 season.

Prize money distribution was wider than ever before.