

# MERCHANDISING

## IS KEY TO SCOTT'S

# SHOP PROFITS

By D. SCOTT CHISHOLM



PAUL  
SCOTT

ONE of the keenest minds I've ever contacted in professional golf is Paul Scott. He has the shop at the three municipally owned and operated Griffith Park Courses in Los Angeles and he does a whale of a business in a very business-like way. To start with he's got as fine a display shop as one can ask for and it is so arranged that when the golfers head for the locker-room, they must needs go through Scott's shop. There is no other way that I know of. It is the type of shop that invites one to buy. His merchandise, like his floor and his walls and his counters and his windows, is as clean as a whistle and is constantly changed from one place to another with the result that everytime a customer enters Paul Scott's emporium it appears to him that it has been restocked with brand new goods.

"The more I move my stock around the more inviting it seems to look to my regulars—and to myself. Moving a couple of sets of clubs from one end of my salesroom to the other every other day or so makes more of a difference than one would think. I keep telling my assistants, of which I have 10, to make such changes every other day or so and it would surprise one to know how much this handling keeps the lads posted on just what we carry in stock. It refreshes their memories," said Scott to this writer when he cornered him behind his counter recently.

"My salesroom measures 18x30 ft. I wish it were a bit wider. I am a great believer in keeping lots of merchandise on hand. As you can see, I have over 100 matched sets of clubs on hand right now and well over five hundred clubs in

all. That's counting single ones that do not belong to any matched set. I carry all makes of clubs because I have calls for all makes. I had one fellow in here the other day asking for a Jim Braid jigger. Imagine that. The jigger was used by Braid over 20 years ago. I have clubs, both in sets and singles, for the milkman and for the millionaire. It does not matter what a customer asks for in the way of clubs or balls—I carry them all. I've got to. My clientele hail from all parts of the universe. I have customers come to me from almost every state in the Union, so you see, I must have a stock of merchandise on hand to meet all demands.

Anxious to know just how many makes of golf balls Scott carries on hand, I began by asking him, "How many gross of balls do you carry in stock, as a general thing?" Back came the answer, "Usually about 20 gross and about every make of ball is represented. I carry two-bit balls and many seventy-five centers. Because of my big turnover, all my golf balls are as fresh as a daisy and are never returned to me because of age. I will not carry any balls that are so old from lying in stock that they have lost their resiliency."

At this point I asked Paul to tell me all about his business and to eliminate my question asking. So here goes Paul Scott as he told me things in his own sales shop at Griffith Park in a very interesting way. Scott is a man of learning and for that reason he was easily interviewed.

"To properly conduct a business of this



The door in the background, leading from outdoors into the shop, must be used by all golfers bound for the locker-room. This arrangement is a big aid to sales.

sort and of this magnitude the proprietor must be more than a golf instructor and a good player. He must be a merchant. If I failed to pay the strictest attention to my business and exercise up-to-date business methods in my merchandising and also in my buying, I'd go bankrupt in mighty short order. The overhead in a place like this, naturally, is terrific and I've got to be on the job every minute.

### Better Merchants Is Pro Goal

Unless pros become merchants as well as teachers and players they will lose cast in the eyes of the golfers, and will be injured financially as well. The future of the golf pro looks dark unless he becomes a better business man.

Every year a professional gains more knowledge in his business, and the only way he can capitalize on this increase in knowledge and ability is by selling more golf equipment and giving more lessons.

Chiselers, stores, and wholesale hardware companies are eating more and more into the profits that rightly belong to the golf pro, provided he is doing his job right.

By that I mean if he carries a large variety of stock that will satisfy every member in his club. If he can't carry every kind of merchandise, he can at least talk to the customer courteously and sell him on the idea of getting them for him. If he keeps his stock clean, attractive and up to date, employs clean, capable assistants, pays his bills, devotes his entire time to the welfare of the members, then he is entitled to their patronage; and the manufacturers should protect his interests by making certain that anybody who is

not a legitimate dealer in golf equipment shall not be sold at less than retail price.

By a legitimate dealer, I mean a dealer who sells at the regular retail price and who has at least \$100 in merchandise in stock. Every one in business is entitled to a fair margin of profit, and the margin of profit which has been set by the manufacturers is not unfair to the dealer or consumer.

Many visiting golfers come to my place to rent sets of clubs. I charge 50 cents a day for a set that no one has to feel ashamed of using. They are all reconditioned from time to time and, even if I do say it myself, these clubs look mighty nifty after a coat of shellac and a tightened grip. Sometimes I rent out 40 to 50 sets. My assistants have to make a careful check when these clubs are turned in. Some of the drivers and brassies feel pretty sweet to many of my customers and there is just the possibility of one getting itself misplaced in some peculiar manner. That's only human nature anyway.

### Refinished Clubs Sell Well

I have one room at the rear of my sales room, a department all by itself and an assistant there all of the time, where all clubs taken in on trade are reconditioned and put on sale as seconds. I never try to pawn them off as brand new. That would be doing business under false pretenses. In this section, old woods and irons that you wouldn't give tuppence for are refinished in masterful style by the expert in charge and just as long as I make a fairly reasonable margin of profit on them, I'm perfectly satisfied. Misrep-

resentation is the ruination of any business, and I would be a fool to try to sell these done-overs as new products.

### Tremendous Annual Play Volume

We get very heavy play at Griffith Park all through the year. Last year the courses were open every day of the year. Our biggest one day saw 889 customers tee off. The grand total for 1937, to be exact, was 170,040. For years we've been used to only two 18 hole courses, the Wilson and the Harding; but recently an additional nine hole layout was thrown open and since that time play has materially increased. All fairways and greens are of grass and are kept up in magnificent shape, and are usually as well groomed and conditioned as most of the private courses in the section. Green fees cost 75 cents on week days and one dollar on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays; a special monthly ticket, good only on week days, is five dollars. These charges are not unreasonable when it is remembered that our courses are luxuriously turfed and our greens are keen and as true as any to be found on any public course the country over. They are seeded to the famous Cocos strain of bent.

Directly behind my sales room I have a well equipped driving or practice range, which is extremely popular and from which I derive quite a handsome income. I give customers a pail containing 20 balls for fifteen cents; 40 balls for twenty-five cents and 90 balls for fifty cents for use at the range, which is well protected by wire netting from adjacent highways. We have splendid locker-room accommodations for our guests at Griffith Park. I have an assistant giving lessons continually, for which I charge \$2.00 for every 40 minutes. I only give lessons when one of my special pupils comes along and takes me away from my counter in the shop or my desk at the rear. I feel I am of more value to my business in my sales room than out on the tee instructing.

Caddie welfare is a serious matter with us at Griffith Park and with the Board of Park Commissioners, who are as follows: Mabel V. Socha, President; Roy S. Stockton, Frank Merrill, Henry W. Bruce, Ernest Duque, and Gilbert Skutt, who is Superintendent of Parks for the city of Los Angeles. Nowhere of my ken are the lads taken care of in such princely style. They have their own specially designed building with lockers, showers, sitting room, card room, horse shoe yard,

ping-pong tables and their very own private putting courses. Caddie fees are \$1.00 per round for single and a dollar and half for double, which is slightly higher than throughout the East and Middle West chiefly because the boys usually must travel long distances around Los Angeles to get to the park. It's a new country and a big country and bus accommodations are still in an elementary stage. In closing I would impress upon my brother professionals the great value of knowing how to buy, how to display, and finally, how to sell their merchandise. It's a serious study all by itself. But it's worth the studying. I've found that out.

**FRED WHITING**, pro-greenkeeper for the past 27 years at the Royal St. George's GC, Sandwich, England, and for the past 15 years official scorer for the qualifying rounds for both the British Amateur and Open, has just ended a three months visit with his son, Wallie, pro at



Fred Whiting, veteran pro-green keeper of Royal St. George's, England, who has just completed a n extended visit in the U. S.

the Pelham CC, Pelham Manor, N. Y. The elder Whiting, who is 64 years old, gave Jim Barnes, pro at Crescent AC, Huntington, L. I., N. Y., his first job at the age of 14. Barnes worked in Whiting's shop 4 years before coming to the States to take his first pro job.

Another of his proteges in this country is Jack Williams, pro at Piping Rock, Locust Valley, L. I., N. Y. Jack went to work for Whiting at the age of 15 and stayed there 10 years. He came straight from that job to Piping Rock, in 1914, and has been there ever since. The Duke of Windsor was formerly a member at Sandwich and took lessons from Whiting, who, incidentally, thinks Hagen is the greatest golfer we have ever sent to England.