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## "CHEAPER DOWNTOWN"

this year!

**W**ELL-INFORMED opinion holds that over half of a pro's members buy their balls "downtown." And the trend grows: *The Sporting Goods Dealer*, after a nation-wide inquiry, reports 86 jobbers as saying "The Golf goods business trends toward the retail stores rather than to the pro".

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## Asks How Club Establishes Handicap System

Editor; GOLFDOM:

*What is the standard practice in establishing a handicap system?*

Harvey (N. D.) CC.

Reply:

In establishing a handicap system, first determine the order in which handicap strokes are to be allotted on your course. There are two schools of thought in this matter. One holds that distance alone should govern the order of taking strokes with the first stroke award on the longest hole of the course, the second stroke on the next longest and so on to the 18th stroke which is given on the shortest hole of the layout.

If the first handicap stroke is assigned to a hole on the first nine, the second stroke will be given to the longest hole on the second nine and then back to the first nine for the third stroke alternating, in this fashion, so that the odd numbered strokes are given on one nine and the even numbered strokes on the other.

The other method of determining the order in which strokes are to be given is based on the difficulty of the holes rather than on their length. To determine the difficulty of the holes, collect several hundred actual scores made by your players. From this bunch of cards the total strokes taken by all the players on each hole is determined. The theory is that the harder the hole, the more strokes will have been required by your players.

However, this does not permit you to compare par three holes with par four holes. You can readily see that more strokes would be taken on a par four hole and yet it might be much easier to play that particular hole in par than it would be to score a three on a three-par hole.

To overcome this, take the average number of strokes required by your players for each hole and divide this average by the par of the hole, carrying the total out to about three decimal points. This will give some such figure as 1.462 for one hole and 1.671 for another. Obviously, the 1.671 hole is the more difficult although it may be a three par hole and the other a four.

Having determined the order in which you will award handicap strokes, the next step is to establish handicaps for your players. This is accomplished by having them turn in their five best scores. These

are averaged and from this average the par of the course is subtracted. Players are allowed, as their handicap, 80% of this difference between the average of their five best scores and par. Fractional strokes above .5 are raised to the next full stroke.

Whenever a player completes a round in fewer strokes than the worst of his previous five best scores he is expected to turn it in so that a new average and a new handicap can be computed. Handicapping is a waste of time unless your players cooperate to the extent of keeping their scores recorded and their handicaps where they should be.

### Rainy Weather Is Money-Maker for Smart Pros

**R**AIN, which has caused many pros to mourn lost sales, has been made a sales ally of many of the most alert merchandisers in pro golf. As far as course playing conditions are concerned the fortunes spent by golf clubs on drainage have made most of the courses quick draining and there no longer are small lakes to be negotiated.

In player's equipment there are now so many excellent practical items for rain

play the pro's own failure to take command of the situation is the major factor in curtailing play on the mildly wet or threatening days. Spiked rubber overshoes are available at moderate prices and due to their stretching make a comparatively easy proposition in stocking so that a wide range of fits is provided the members.

Waterproof jackets, overtrousers and skirts now are smart and comfortable. The old days when the garments bound the players and were as hot as Turkish baths, have passed. If the players aren't aware of the new developments, the pro loses money. Improvements in grips and the availability of some excellent non-slip grip waxes have virtually eliminated the former problem of slipping clubs.

All you need do to see that scoring conditions are not made unbeatably adverse by rains is to consider some of the tournament rounds played during quite heavy rains on last winter's tournament circuit. Scores, generally, didn't get out of line.

As British-born pros and homebreds who have visited England and Scotland know, there is considerable golf played overseas under weather conditions that would keep our own players indoors. Pros

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