

Year's Equipment Business Good, Supply Dealers Say

REPORTS from golf course equipment and supply dealers indicate equipment business in 1939 continued its upward trend, notwithstanding continuance of sharp operating economies still being rigidly adhered to in several districts. Good golf weather in most sections, after a wet, late spring, kept course maintenance problems close to normal, the reports indicate. But most of the course equipment boys again come up with the squawk, and legitimately, that what continues to cut down on sales of supplies and equipment from the fellows who make selling of golf maintenance needs their exclusive business, is the first glance, save-a-penny, short-time outlook some clubs continue to use in purchasing equipment and supplies to meet course needs.

"Service" Factor Overlooked

The rap is that course dealers, whose sole business it is to keep the courses in their districts supplied with whatever they want, whenever they want it and as cheaply and economically as possible, find themselves being beaten out of considerable sales just because someone at a club knows a person whose brother-in-law works at a hardware store that has recently taken a few mowers on as a sideline; or perhaps the local drug store has acquired a few pounds of seed and a little fertilizer, and for quick close-out, offers them at "cut rate" prices. Exaggerated cases, yes, but the point they make is clear. Clubs, whose buying is entrusted to persons who, to save a few cents, and perhaps to help make as good a showing as they think possible when it comes to paring that budget, buy items from the aforementioned sources, with little or no thought as to what might happen next year when some of the equipment they have purchased may need *servicing*, are making it needlessly tough on the legitimate dealers, who, to meet competition, are forced to lower prices below what should be the limit to make the item come close to paying for itself, and then, to get back that loss, must either "up" the price on other products, or drop the piece of equipment entirely.

Of course, the dealer eventually gets most of this business back from the clubs who have had their fingers burned as a result of buying from strictly hit-and-run golf

outlets, but in the meantime, it is costing him considerable sales. The service angle is one the hit-and-run golf outfit simply can't lick. If something happens to go wrong with a product it has sold to a golf club, the club is really up against it when it comes to getting it fixed in a hurry—and right. Not so with the legitimate course dealers—they're on the job all day every day in the year to quickly remedy any trouble with any equipment they have sold to a club.

Too, the golf course dealer understands thoroughly any club's maintenance need in his district, and is always in a position to advise, competently, on how to go about correcting sources of trouble, and what equipment or supplies would be most logical and economical for a particular club's circumstances. That's a part of the game the side-line golf distributor can't lick, unless he makes golf 100% his business.

Dealers' reports indicate improvement in the trade-in problems, a headache that became quite acute in the equipment field about three years ago. Improvement has come by limiting trade-ins to reasonably late models of course equipment, which are in salable condition or which can be put in salable condition within the limits permitted by the allowance made and what the purchaser will be willing to pay. Old procedure was to take in most anything, and then spend more to fix it up than could be realized from the sale of the equipment. Consequently, the dealer was stuck with what he got in the trade in; manufacturers don't take back a piece of used golf equipment taken in trade for new machinery. Dealers report little trouble disposing of equipment made in the period from about 1930 to date. The chief problem is on equipment of the vintage of the early twenties, in some cases going back to 1921.

LEWIS MYERS, pro at Triggs GC, Providence, R. I., has devised a starting sheet that can be used at private or public courses in getting an accurate picture of playing conditions at the course.

The sheet also makes it easy to locate players in event important messages for them are received.

Columns on the sheet are:

Player—Member or Guest—Starting Time—Finish 1st 9—Finish 2d 9—Caddie No.—Special Service Given, or Remarks—Message Received—Tournament Entry (Yes or No)—Score.