

Kirkwood Shows His Sales Talent

By Bob Johnston

JOE KIRKWOOD, Huntingdon Valley CC (Abington, Pa.) professional, is noted more for his trick shot exhibitions than for any particular talent in the merchandising field, but the veteran shotmaker is rapidly building an enviable reputation in that department among Philadelphia district pros. For Joe, who has been at the swank Huntingdon Valley club less than a year and a half, is doing a selling job there that is the envy of all his colleagues. So far this year, he's more than doubled the amount of business done during the same period in 1939; he's trebled the sales made by his predecessor.

Running a pro-shop is a comparatively new job for the globe-trotting Huntingdon Valley veteran. His only other experience in that field came 25 years ago, at a small Australian club. Since then, Joe and Walter Hagen have been touring the world, giving exhibitions at 2,800 courses from Connecticut to Calcutta.

Joe, however, has made many experienced shopkeepers sit up in open-mouthed astonishment since taking over at Huntingdon Valley. Making full use of the diverse knowledge picked up during two decades of traveling, Kirkwood caters to a discriminating clientele with a wide variety of clothing and equipment.

He imports sweaters and mufflers from England, and belts, slippers and small purses and wallets from Havana. Occupying a prominent place on his counter are neckties made in Nassau, and golf shoes of his own design. Shoes are one of his best sellers, for he stocks both golf and dress shoes for men and women. He sold over 200 pair last year.

Stock Is Complete

Kirkwood aims to carry a complete line of everything his customers could purchase in the sporting goods department of most downtown department stores. "They don't need to go downtown for anything," says Joe. "Why, last December was my second biggest month in volume of sales, because many club members made their Christmas purchases in the shop."

When Kirkwood first came to Huntingdon Valley, he had the entire pro-shop renovated. Now it's become too cramped for him and they're adding another 20

feet of space. Lining two sides of the display section of the shop are a wide variety of clubs, clothing and other items, all strikingly displayed.

Show cases sit on the side, parallel with the entrance, and they are another example of Joe's ingenuity. The bottom of one section is covered with wooden tees, effectively setting off a display of golf shoes. Other sections of the case are covered with artificial grass as a background for balls and clubs.

"The grass makes them appear more natural," Joe explains. "I think that's where a lot of pros are missing out—they don't bother with effective display."

Another of Kirkwood's innovations is Huntingdon Valley's Tee Club. Kirkwood hit upon the idea of supplying members the newest type tee for one dollar per year, allowing them to help themselves from a globular jar atop the showcase. It eliminates the bothersome bookkeeping for 10-cent items, and no one abuses the privilege.

Huntingdon Valley's 350 members are lured into the pro-shop under the caddie-payment system set up by Kirkwood, and thus can't help seeing his displays. Each player must first buy a caddie ticket at the shop before making a round, then the



Because the Indiana (Pa.) CC is so close to town and so many of the club's members change into their clothes at home instead of using the locker rooms, Floyd Derr, greenkeeper, hit upon the idea of building shoe racks alongside the members' clubs stored in Pro Bus Drexilius' shop. Any confusion in finding shoes is eliminated thereby, because the member always finds both his clubs and shoes together. The idea is proving very popular with the members.

bag-toter turns it in for cash at the end of the day. Both player and caddie, however, write their names on the ticket and thus a record of the transaction is kept.

Players have another opportunity of purchasing balls, tape and other necessary items at the halfway mark, for Kirkwood keeps the shelter near the 10th tee well stocked.

Kirkwood, a candid camera devotee, takes pictures of members in unguarded moments, later develops and enlarges them himself. They're handy in pointing out a player's faults on tee and green. He also takes colored moving pictures of the players and shows them on club nights.

This year he started a ringer tournament for the ladies, offering as a prize an expensive bag and matched set of clubs. Cards cost 10 cents apiece, and competitors can turn in as many as they desire. Kirkwood scans the scores turned in, keeps account of the player's best holes on each card. He also runs a kickers' tournament for the men members every weekend.

About 80 lessons are given every week at Huntingdon Valley, with Joe dividing the chores among himself, Joe, Jr., and Charlie Sheppard. Sheppard, former Castlewood CC pro, has been with Kirkwood since last April. Junior golf also gets an enthusiastic nod from Joe and a class of boys and girls are given free instruction every Saturday morning.

Cards Identify Club's Caddies Needing Lift to Work

MOUNTAIN Ridge CC, West Caldwell, N. J., is remote from the caddie supply center and on the same road as four other courses that need kids. Mountain Ridge members when driving to the club would pick up youngsters, but if the kids were regulars at another of the 5 clubs on the road, the kids would ride only as far as the courses at which they worked.

The Mountain View boys have caps on which are the club initials but the kids lose, or forget the caps. Hence M. S. Stern, Mountain View's green-chairman, thought of issuing identification cards the club's kids could flash in getting preference in pick-ups by club members. The cards are handsome jobs printed on yellow celluloid, and are numbered as issued to the respec-

tive caddies. The cards were donated to the club by M. P. Leeds, a member.

On the back of the cards are 6 of the major rules for caddies. Jim Taylor, Mountain View pro, says the card system has been the answer to the transportation problem.

The club employs the PGA caddie charts in its caddie education. The charts are covered with cellophane which keeps them in good condition. The caddiemaster posts a different chart each Friday night and talks to the kids on this chart each Saturday morning.

P. A. Vaile, Well Known Golf Writer, Dies in Chicago

P. A. VAILE, prolific veteran writer on golf and tennis, died in the Cook County hospital, Chicago, July 19, of coronary thrombosis. Almost two years ago he had suffered an illness from which he never fully recovered.

A native of New Zealand, in which country he practiced law, Mr. Vaile went to England where he became prominent as a writer on golf and tennis, and in general literary and intellectual circles. Two of his works, "Cosmography" and "Wake Up England," revealed a prophetic trait in this somewhat eccentric genius.

He also was active as an inventor of golf and tennis equipment and of marine and aviation devices.

Finishing 3-Year Loop—Into GOLFDOM's offices just at press time came 41-year-old George "Happy" O'Brien, itinerant caddie who has 28 scrapbooks filled with attested scorecards and newspaper write-ups to prove that since June 1, 1937 he has caddied at 1,120 different courses in the U. S., the British Isles and South America. Happy estimates he has walked and hitch-hiked about 70,000 miles these past three years (he scorns to use train or bus) and that he has been air-viewed by sportscasters at 230 radio stations.

Now he's on his way back to his home town, Boston, to sit down and write his reminiscences, in which among other things he will state that Oakmont is the toughest golf course he has seen, that Cypress Point is the most beautiful, and that the course at City Park, New Orleans, is the finest munny layout in the States.