



The Brae Burn CC pro-shop, built just a year ago, is presided over by Dan Keefe. Its location is good, being just off the door to the locker-room.

SERVICE: Pro's Success Recipe

By Sanford Herman

BRAE BURN CC, nine miles out of Boston in West Newton, Mass., has a membership of 650, mostly residents of Newton and Brookline, possibly the richest pair of cities in America. It has 27 holes of fine golf course and must be ranked among the nation's leading clubs.

But this is not sufficient to account for the big business being done by pro Roy Bronsdon and pro-shop manager Dan Keefe, as only a fraction of their business can be attributed to the volume which would be expected as a matter of course in such a well-to-do club.

What then, accounts for their success?

"Service," said Roy Bronsdon, and "Take care of your business."

Let's see how well this philosophy has worked at Brae Burn.

Dan Keefe went to work on the Brae Burn course 33 years ago. Except for a short interval as pro at Pocasset he has been there ever since, rising to assistant greenkeeper, caddiemaster in 1913, and pro from 1918 to 1925. In the latter year he became manager of the golf department in its entirety, taking charge of caddies, tournaments, handicaps, starting times, buying and merchandising—everything but

instruction, storing and repairing, which are handled by the pro.

Dan has devised a starting time system which saves plenty of headaches. Week-ends, he starts them off from three different tees. For instance, on Saturday afternoons, they start from the first tee from 1 to 2:30 o'clock; from the seventh from 1 to 1:55 and from the 12th from 1:20 to 1:50. At the end of 1½ hours Dan has 148 players on the 18-hole course, with plenty of room for everybody. To have the course clear on that afternoon, no one is allowed to start from No. 1 tee after 12:30. Sunday mornings, no one is allowed on the course before 8:20.

To receive a week-end starting time, a member leaves the names of his foursome with Dan during the preceding week-end, stating preferred time. Later in the week, Dan mails the member a postcard telling him which time he has been assigned.

With a membership of 650, such a system is a necessity, and this efficiency in starting is an example of what they mean by "service." A happy member makes a good customer.

"At Brae Burn, everybody wants to

'play ball' with the pro and the pro-shop. Members know that by so doing they are in reality patronizing themselves," said one of the shop assistants.

Troubles with members buying equipment outside are almost unknown here. In fact there would be very little advantage in their doing so. Dan has made an extensive study and found that all his prices are either as low as or lower than those of any retail store.

The shop itself is a new one, built just a year ago, and finished in knotty pine, ammonia stained.

Its judicious location at the locker-room door where players going out on the course must pass close by, doesn't hurt business any.

The repair shop, storage racks, stock room and Bronsdon's office are in a separate building close by.

Sets of clubs are ranged along most of the merchandise shop's wall space. Clothing is displayed in a comparatively small glass showcase (see cut). The stock is probably one of the largest of any country club in America. Dan Keefe sees to it that it is always fresh and up to the minute in content and display.

Dan sells lots of winter sports equipment, because winter sports constitute an

ship, as Dan puts it. Last year there were 530 such "minor leaguers."

This year-round activity at the club contributes more than a little to boosting the shop's business.

Weekends, a small table is placed just outside the shop door, at the locker-room entrance, and on this is displayed some one item which would seem to be a good seller at the particular time.

That's about as far as either Dan Keefe or Roy Bronsdon go in any overt attempt to promote business.

Markdowns, specials, or sales are never indulged in.

Members Get Real Service

Roy and Dan make it a point to supply the player with exactly what he asks for and what he is accustomed to. Should the unlikely contingency arise that they haven't in stock the item wanted, they order it. That's what the boys mean by "service". That's the sort of treatment members have become accustomed to and that's one very good reason why "everybody plays ball."

High pressure methods or anything remotely resembling them are out. Business keeps coming in nevertheless.

Weekends, Dan needs one and often two assistants in the shop, and on a few exceptional occasions four men have been kept busy at once waiting on customers.

Business was "extra good" in 1939, in fact it was the best in ten years. No tricks or acrobatics were involved. It was simply that good times had returned to some extent.

Generally speaking, the pro department's business didn't arrive overnight. It grew. It grew as the pro department gained prestige with the members, as the shop and the pros offered more and more "service," as the club itself became more and more solidly established in the years since its beginning in 1897.

Dan advances still another reason for the pro department's success, and that is, that like himself, most of the help have been there a long time. The members have long ago become acquainted with them and have learned to have confidence in them.

One fellow who hasn't been at Brae Burn very long but who fits very well, nevertheless, is Roy Bronsdon.

He has been there only since last season, but already, according to Dan, he has proved to be highly popular. Last year he gave a record number of lessons.

Bronsdon was imported from Wianno on



Dan Keefe (left) explaining the fine points of a wood to one of the members.

important phase of Brae Burn activities. The club has a ski tow, ski jump, toboggan slide and skating rink. The skating pond is illuminated at night with 24 lights, and the hockey rink with 18.

Participation in winter sports is encouraged with provision for "Outside Skating Memberships" which give to non-members winter sports privileges only, and which constitute a "minor league" of member-



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Cape Cod. Previously, he was at Oyster Harbors, also on the Cape. For the past 13 winters, he has been pro at Mid Pines, Pinehurst, N. C. He was Massachusetts open champ in 1934.

Roy and his assistant, Johnny Schoonmaker—brought up this year for the first time from Southern Pines, N. C.—will give, between them, 25 lessons a day at the height of the Brae Burn season.

The way the pro department at Brae Burn has built up the storage servicing business is amazing. Just a few years back, there were 90 sets of clubs in the lockers at the repair shop where they are stored. Last year the racks had to be enlarged, because the number of members taking advantage of this service was

steadily rising, and under Bronsdon's supervision the number has jumped this year to over 400!

For \$7.50 a season the clubs are inspected and polished after each round, re-wound, lacquered, and cleaned as needed during the season, and are conveniently stored.

This is not made possible entirely by the fact that Brae Burn is an unusually big and wealthy club. A few years ago, Bronsdon was pro at a small 72-member club on Cape Cod, and every one of the 72 members used his storage-cleaning-repairing service. And as for buying in the pro-shop, they were his customers, 100%.

In giving lessons, if the pupil so wishes, Bronsdon has a set of still pictures taken,

