

They Profit From Planning

SEVERAL pros holding down jobs at the smaller clubs over the country were recently asked by GOLFDOM to tell how they operate their shops in a way they have discovered works out best for their clubs, their members, and for their own interests. Douglas C. Doane, pro at the Arundel GC, Kennebunkport, Me., writes:

"At a club like ours, the sale of merchandise accounts for a substantial part of a pro's income. But I feel that profits can be increased if the small club pro would keep, accurately, from year to year a record of his monthly sales of individual items. Too many of the pros at the smaller clubs don't do this. With the information he would gain from a system of records, he would be in a position to keep a minimum, but adequate stock. This would save him money on insurance; it would be easier for him to discount his bills—a good credit rating is worth much in any business; he would not lose sales because of a shortage of stock; and he would be able to reduce to a negligible amount the stock not sold at the end of the year.

Know Business Methods

"A little time spent in studying sales methods also will pay big dividends. Buyers like to have a variety of merchandise to select from. All articles should be clean, and the prices should be plainly marked. Good display is very important in making sales; displays should be changed about once a week for best results. I have found that by taking the

cheaper balls and clubs, marking and displaying them in a prominent position, sales increased immediately.

"On the smaller items, like tees and adhesive tape, I believe it pays to keep the prices low. Increased sales make up for the lower margin of profit and your customers will know that you will not overcharge them on the more expensive articles—for they will see that your prices compare with other retailers.

"To increase the sales of clubs at golf clubs the size of ours, often a liberal trade-in allowance on the old clubs will bring good results. Another effective policy in selling clubs—especially to a beginner who is buying his first set—is to include a few free lessons.

Many Repair Jobs Left

"The amount of money a pro could make repairing clubs has fallen off considerably in the last dozen years because clubs today are much stronger in construction. However, there still are many club repair jobs that a pro can do in the pro-shop, such as refinishing wood heads, changing the loft or lie of a club, replacing broken plug, changing the size of grips—work which requires only a small outlay of money for materials. Quick and expert service on repairs creates good will, which in turn results in the sale of other goods and services.

"Teaching is a subject in itself. There is no limit to what one may learn about it. I think it is the most important part of a pro's work, and I think a pro should take every opportunity to watch and help his players.

"I believe the pro at the smaller club is more closely connected to club work than is the pro at a large club. Very often he is responsible for the training and conduct of caddies. By spending a little time to see that they are well trained, a pro helps not only the boys, but his members, his club, and himself as well.

"A good percentage of the members enjoy tournaments, especially one-day affairs and sweepstakes. Promoting them increases the number of rounds of golf played, which means more sales for the pro.

"Members appreciate having little



On a recent trip into Texas, Tom Robbins, of Crawford, MacGregor, Canby's New York office, along with Binnie Plummer, pro at Walnut Hills CC, Dallas, and Joe Phillips, Greenville, went hunting three times. Results: 1st hunt, 26 rabbits; 2nd hunt, 34 rabbits; 3rd hunt, 28 rabbits. Tom is shown in the above photo looking proudly at one of the day's 'hauls.'

favors done for them, and it is good policy to do all you possibly can for your players—whether they buy little or much from you. I believe any pro who gives good value and good service will receive the support of his members without having to ask for it.”

Harry Ogden, pro-greenkeeper at Keokuk, Iowa's, Fairview GC, a 9-hole private layout, has a group of directors at the club who work in very close co-operation with him in planning what should be done, in the best way, with a very limited club income. Harry writes:

“I have seven directors who really work with me in getting done what must be done around the shop and course, and this is really a big help in operating a club like ours. Our club is private, we have about 200 members, and about 1,000 out-of-town golfers play on a green-fee each year. I try to show the players all the hospitality I can, and attempt to provide the best service I can with the amount of time I have available—our dues are low and we have to make every penny count.

“I have a young fellow who helps me six months out of the year—I'm at the club 9 months. I do not get to play very much golf, and enter few tournaments; you know two do not have much time for playing, when they have to help take care of the course, besides running the pro-shop.

“At a small club, expenses are the things you have to watch at all times, so I feel that a pro in this type of club should be able to do his own greenkeeping work if the situation demands, and fit in his lessons and shop work with it. I have been at the club for 11 years, and in that time we have installed bent grass greens, a large bent grass putting green, and last fall we installed water lines to our tees. I supervised, and did a lot of the actual work in all of this, in addition to carrying on my pro work, and we were able to get this done only by holding down expenses at every turn.

Conducts School Classes

“I have coached the local high school golf squad for the last seven years, and we have won our district championship during four of those years. In addition to coaching the team, I have been working to get just as many students as possible to take up golf. Developing golf among students helps clubs in small towns, because your future members are in school

now, and they have to be encouraged to take up the game when they are young.

“We put on a Keokuk Open every year, and do get some of the good golfers here, although our prize money necessarily cannot be very large. But we've been working it up a little each year, and I hope this year it will be the biggest ever.

“Downtown store competition does not bother me much. I sell more clubs and balls than any of the stores in town, and I don't bother them and they don't bother me. I think too many pros complain about conditions that really aren't as bad as they seem; if you do what you can, and not worry about the other fellow, I think the pro can get along fine at a small club. I am.”

“I Would Like to Play with My Professional, But—”

By John Budd

“I WOULD like to play with my pro, but he never seems to have time for me,” stated a certain man in a certain club locker-room. This man, naturally, bought his golf balls from a hardware store, his golf bag from a mail order house, and his clubs wholesale, through a friend.

Does our duty to our club include a duty to play as much golf as possible with all of our members? Remember, our membership looks to us as leaders in our chosen field. They admire our biting iron shots, the ease of our well-hit drives.

Howard Beckett of Atlanta told me of a time when one of his best members was disgusted about his game and on the verge of quitting the club and the game. Howard made a point to go on the course with this member and help him out of the rut. Would you say that Howard rendered a great service to his club? Yes; and in doing this he did a lot for his own standing with that member. Who will this member buy his golf equipment from now?

How many professionals of your acquaintance keep a register of all the people played with during the season? My service station keeps me informed as to when the oil needs changing in my car.

In an effort to better service our clientele, we could make every effort to play with as many members as possible.