

A Real Merchandiser —That's Heinie

Crystal Lawns at Joliet has great play—still retains its 'private club atmosphere.' Reason?—Heinie Sick's smart merchandising.

By KARL SUTPHIN

HERE'S a fellow who's typical of a superior class of pros that are seldom heard of more than 50 miles away from their home courses. He's one of a type you find east, west, north, south and central. You don't see his name in tournament news. You don't see him even able to take every Monday off during the season. But when you talk to his banker and to golf manufacturers, you learn he's rated as a fine, sound businessman.

This particular fellow is Heinie Sick, pro at the Crystal Lawns daily fee course at Joliet, Ill.

It's one of those courses where patrons play so habitually that it practically has a private club air about it. And Heinie is a major reason for this faithful patronage. He's built up play at the course by treating each customer as customers like to be treated, and are treated at successful retailing establishments.

Joliet is a manufacturing town. There are 16-year-old boys making \$52 a week at an ammunition plant near Joliet. When you bear in mind that Heinie has been coach of the Joliet High School team that won a state championship from a field representing 143 schools, that he coached the Joliet Catholic High School team that won the Chicago District Catholic high school championship, and that Heinie has been a

pal and counsellor to many of Will County's 1200 caddies, you have a pretty fair hunch as to where these kids go to buy clubs when they get into the real wage-earning class.

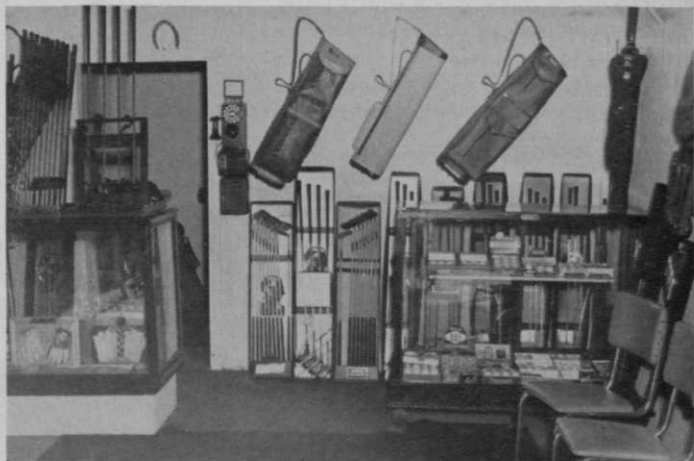
Add to that foresighted promotion with the kids Heinie's work in promoting the state-wide YMCA tournament for Joliet's YMCA, many of whose members Heinie teaches, and the unusual competitive program at the Crystal Lawns course, and you have additional reasons why this Sick has a merchandising background that has set him up in a most substantial business.

The more play there is at the course, the happier the course owners are, naturally, and the more sales opportunities Heinie has. So he has emphasized a competitive program that's of keener interest than that at many private clubs.

One of the big championships at Crystal Lawns is the "Old Man's Championship." Contestants have to be over 40—not so old, but a smart lower age limit to separate the businessmen from the youngsters who used to caddy for them and who are too hot for even competition. But it takes at least an 86 to qualify for any flight of this tournament of the elders so you can see the Old Men are not too feeble.

To get in the 32 of the first flight of the major tournament played annually at Crys-

Sick makes every available bit of space count for plenty in the Crystal Lawns pro-shop, which is only 14 ft. square. A good display of clubs and bags, all in the open for personal inspection. Sick has found to be well worth the comparatively large amount of space devoted to them.



tal Lawns and which attracts players from other fee and private courses in the vicinity one has to be able to break 80.

The competitions which give prize chances to all classes of players have Joliet one of the golf-talkiest and playingest small cities in the country.

Heinie is always on the lookout for exhibitions. Harry Adams has given him a hand in lining up talent for exhibition matches and demonstrations. Harry, Jerry Glynn, Johnny Bulla and other boys have appeared at Crystal Lawns and helped to keep golf interest blazing.

When you mention Johnny of medicine ball fame, some pros would begin to storm. The prospect of Johnny appearing at their courses and reminding the players that golf balls are sold at drug stores is an alarming one to these fellows, but not to Heinie. He says he sells golf balls where golf is played and by making it plain that he has good balls at 25 cents, 3 for \$1, 50 cents and 75 cents, he'll get all the business his smart, vigilant and energetic merchandising merits. He points out as his opinion that many fee and public course pros make a mistake by putting the big play on 75 cent balls when 50 cents per ball is about tops for most of the traffic at such courses. And 3 for \$1 balls are best sellers. How long that will continue with ball prices due for a raise, there's no telling.

This phase can be argued plenty, but Heinie maintains that he gets a much higher percentage of the business that passes his pro-shop than Walgreen's drug stores get of the business that passes their windows.

"When I miss out on a sale it is my fault, not the customer's," Heinie Sick reasons.

He is a great one to shop around the

factories for discontinued lines of clubs and balls and bags. And how he ballyhoos those bargains to the Crystal Lawns players.

Heinie probably does by far the largest business in used clubs of any pro in the Chicago district. He says he never makes a cent on these used club sales and often handles the same used set as many as three times a season. By getting his patrons accustomed to good quality clubs he trades them up and claims more high grade clubs used by players at Crystal Lawns than at any fee course in the country.

Another reason he has a policy of not making a dime on these sales of used clubs is because he figures that getting a good set of clubs in a man or woman's hands is a sure way of making them play more golf. More golfers and more golf is what he's after.

Whether the sale is 10 cents worth of tees or a \$140 set of clubs Heinie gives the customer big-time service. He says that one of the strongest points a fee course pro can have in his selling plan is shop appearance and sales service that will stack right up with the best that's provided at the best of private clubs.

Heinie was brought up right in golf. He started as a caddie at Omaha (Neb.) Field Club when Johnny Goodman was one of the caddie corps. Sick showed possibilities to Stanley Davies, widely known pro at the Omaha club, and Stanley took him into the shop. Anybody who's trained by Stanley and satisfies this able and exacting master pro, learns the business thoroughly and correctly. Heinie later was assistant to Bob Christie and learned plenty from Bob, too.

Sick himself follows the Davies principle in selecting, training and supervising good assistants. The assistant he's had for



One of Heinie Sick's champion pupils is his wife, Mrs. "Bernie" Sick, shown here practicing under her husband's watchful eye. Mrs. Sick holds the women's Cook County Open title.



One of the golf instruction classes at Riverside Military Academy, Gainesville, Ga., is shown in photo above. Les Heon, pro at Montpelier (Vt.) CC, is pro instructor at the Academy, and during the past year gave both group and personalized instruction to more than 100 boys at RMA. Parents of these pupils appreciate the work Heon has been doing there, as their many letters of interest and encouragement during the past three years testify. The practice 'net' shown above was devised by Heon, and serves satisfactorily in providing practice facilities in a limited area.

several years drew No. 158 in the first draft so no pro golf assistant did any better than a tie with Heinie's boy "Weenie" in getting into the draft army.

Heinie says the best golf boosters at his course are the doctors. About 30 of them play every Wednesday at Crystal Lawns. They prescribe the game to many of their patients.

This fellow's shop at Crystal Lawns shows what ingenuity can do with small space. It's an open front shop, only 14 ft. square but looks larger. It contains a counter and show cases and always a good display of clubs of wide price range. The shop has light blue walls, and dark blue steel furniture. The porch in front of it is an attractive lounging place. It's only 15 ft. from the first tee.

Heinie's wife holds the women's Cook County Open title. He taught her. She's cashier at the club and a sound business team-mate for Heinie. She doesn't compete in women's events at the club. Smart girl, that.

Mrs. Sick's record as a golf pupil of her husband has been instrumental in building up large classes and individual lessons for Heinie at the Joliet YWCA.

From high school freshman age to the 90-year post, golfers around Joliet know Heinie Sick and think well of him. His pro colleagues at neighboring clubs, a group of sound and active fellows, think highly of him too. And in this pro business when the other pros in your neighborhood give a cheer for you, you really are good.

Chicago Officials Hold Annual Club Relations Day

ANNUAL Club Relations Day of the Chicago District Golf Assn., when club presidents, governors and committeemen get together to discuss management problems and play an afternoon of golf, was held at Olympia Fields CC, June 20. Counting the women on committees of the Women's Western and Chicago Women's DGA, who this year were invited for the first time, attendance was in excess of 300.

Activities began at a breakfast presided over by CDGA Pres. Maynard D. Fessenden. Speakers were Pres. Paul Smith of Olympia Fields, who welcomed the visiting officials, John Monteith, Jr., of the Green Section, who spoke on ways of improving courses at no extra cost, and Mrs. Chas. B. Willard, president of the Women's Western GA, who discussed junior golf activities.

Golf occupied the attention of the crowd during the afternoon, followed in the evening by a program of speeches and discussions on "What Is Golf News?", "Making Use of All Our Committees", "New Ideas for Women Chairmen", "Handling the Caddie Situation", and "Handling Golf by Promoting Competitive Tournaments".

Including the women golfers in Club Relations Day proved a great success and will be followed in coming seasons.