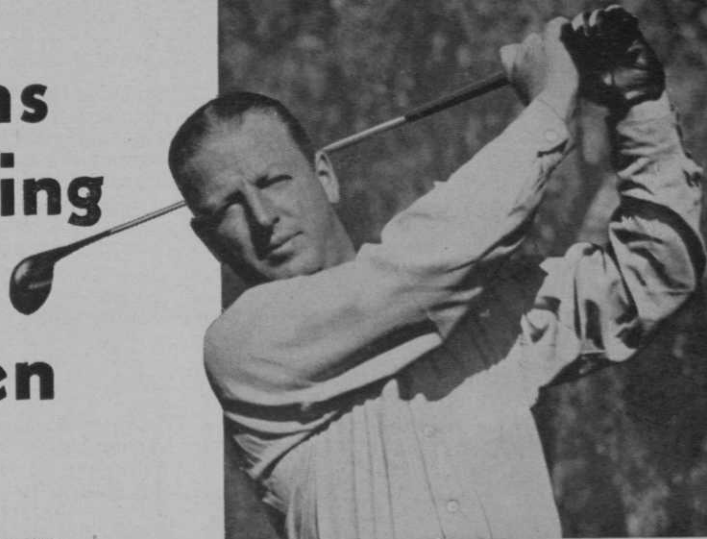


Pro Plans for Making 1946 a Golden Year

By CRAIG WOOD



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GOLF'S first postwar year is going to be a testing one for pros. The demand for clubs should be such that a fellow will be able to get by selling the quota of clubs he's able to get from manufacturers' production. But getting by and letting nature take its course isn't going to be enough. The smart pro workers are going to be making such lively efforts to capitalize on their opportunities that the pro who handles his job in just an ordinary way will look bad by contrast.

One of the vast opportunities for added pro shop profits and member service is in sportswear. Before the war the alert pros who really studied this business made very substantial profits from it. Sportswear profits kept some pros in fairly good financial shape during the war despite the shortages of merchandise.

So make a study of sportswear merchandising. Seldom has this part of the pro shop business been fully pushed. Pros can tell you that in the "old days" there was a considerable income in the sale of hosiery and knickers and sweaters. Next year there'll be vast opportunities especially in selling to players who've been away in the war.

Get the help of good salesmen in planning your sportswear lines so you won't go overboard on your inventories or load up on stuff that won't move. Remember that in sportswear you are in a style business and that the country club is the place where outdoor styles are established. You have to be well-dressed, but not over-dressed, yourself to discreetly push this business.

Profit in Shoes

Another item that's an important part of the golf apparel business is shoes, and with shoe rationing having prevailed during the war there is bound to be a big

demand for golf shoes. Almost any moderate-sized club with wise and vigorous pro merchandising and a good selection of stock ought to be able to make a \$1000 profit on shoes next year. I was impressed before the war at the amount of women's golf shoe business done by pros who'd given special attention to this field.

On any of your merchandising plans for next year it isn't too early to start right now advertising to your members and informing them that you'll have the best of the postwar golf merchandise. Naturally manufacturers are going to see to it that the pros who establish the brand preferences and the styles get first selection. That's something you want to tell your own members so they'll see the reason for buying from you.

It's certain that golf instruction will be one of the great possibilities for increase of income next year. Your members will have more time and not be under the intense business pressure of wartime. But you have to bear in mind that golf instruction methods and golf instruction selling methods are changing very definitely. If you haven't been using motion pictures in your golf instruction, you'd better get started. And if you have been using movies it's time that you reviewed your methods and results and introduced whatever changes you believe your experience suggests.

Keep Instruction Records

Your own records of instruction have to be rather complete to keep up with the times in golf teaching. A card index system that records what the pupil has been told and what results or faults you have observed, should be maintained. That's some work, of course, but it's work that makes more money for you by impressing

on the pupil that you've been giving more than just spending some time on the tee and going through a ritual. Talk to any smart pro who has kept such a system and he'll sell you on the value of that method.

Another thing; watch the scores as put onto the handicap cards. If a member's game isn't what you think it should be, it's your job to make a discreet inquiry and suggest some helps. That'll take you only a few minutes and it will be the best advertising you possibly could get for yourself—advertising that makes consumer good will and directly encourages sales.

Select Good Assistant

One of the most important factors in first class pro merchandising is a good assistant. You can't get them ready-made. You have to carefully select the best qualified and most ambitious youngsters and some time training them, advising them and encouraging them. This is one of the most important management jobs of a pro, and will pay him rich returns.

I've had probably the finest group of youngsters as my assistants that can be boasted of by any pro in the country. Name me a better roster of assistants than Paul Runyan, Dick Metz, Victor Ghezzi, Claud Harmon, Ben Loving, Henry Poe, Jim McHale, Ray Hill, Ren Smith and Pete Harmon. I'm of the opinion that the advice I got from pros older than myself to select my assistants carefully and help them learn the job right, was probably the best advice I've had from successful veterans in the game.

The assistant must have character, judgment and good business sense. Those

qualities that mean so much in serving the members in the shop and on the lesson tees, certainly don't retard the development of the assistant's game as you readily appreciate from the list of my assistants.

Often members subconsciously judge the pro by the sort of assistant he has, more than the pro may realize. An assistant has the right to expect some of his pay in competent training from the head professional, but the pro can't make the mistake of thinking that the youngster can be largely paid off by the opportunity to watch the expert performance of the boss. The encouragement of cash for an assistant's able and faithful work always has to be kept in mind. Under the wise arrangement, the more money an assistant makes the more he's making for the pro and the stronger he's making the pro in his job as a man who selects, trains and supervises the right sort of a staff.

Balance in Assistant Training

There is a nice balance that has to be made between the training and performance of the assistant inside the shop and outside on the lesson or practice tee. The youngster who wants to improve his own game at the expense of his thorough golf business training isn't the one who's best for the club or the pro. The assistant who is to be developed so he'll be good on his job and for whom you eventually can locate a master pro job to which you can strongly recommend him, has to keep on his toes in the shop selling, and checking the inventory.

Watch the Inventory

Watching the inventory is going to be a highly important thing for the pro in

Vic Baker, Lakewood CC, Long Beach, Calif., pro, and George Shaw, Wilson's west coast representative, show what's ahead at the golf clubs. A guy calls around in his Ensign (unpaid ad) plane, visits the pro and gets an order while gorgeous dolls, unbothered by pro and salesman, mess around the plane, then the salesman cranks up his plane and gets the hell out, leaving the models to hang around the bar with the lucky members.



1946. Nobody will be able to afford to get stuck with slow-moving stock, not simply because the capital is tied up but because the slow moving stock is an indication that the shop is missing out on sales by not having merchandise that really sells well. If stock doesn't move and special sales action doesn't work easily (in case you are yourself sold on the item) then have the salesman replace it quickly. New stock coming into the shop means keeping members' buying interest fresh and keen.

For one reason or another you won't be able to get all of your members' business. Maybe it's the member's fault and maybe it's yours, that the member buys downtown. But in either case your best chance of correcting the situation is to first do something discreetly yourself. When you find members who are in the habit of buying downtown, arrange Sunday afternoon games with them. Chances are they'll be very diplomatically converted in most cases, and will become sales boosters for you.

Know All Members

Most of the highly successful businessmen pros I know make it a point to play with different members every Saturday and Sunday. About the most injudicious thing a pro can do is to play with only a few of his members. The member, regardless of the sort of a game he plays, is entitled to have the pro know the member's name and speak to him and really be friendly. And that certainly is the way which the pro can best establish the business relations necessary to his prosperity and security at the club.

The extension of sales development is something that the pro must think about for next year. In some clubs the pros make commission arrangements with locker-room men on sales of apparel and shoes. This is something to consider as it often works out with great mutual satisfaction and profit. The blind bogey is almost a "must" at the well-conducted pro department.

The blind bogey should be run every Saturday, Sunday and holiday with a credit book being kept in the shop for the wins. Any good businessman pro who keeps a watch over his blind bogey books is impressed by the additional purchases of the fellows who come in to the shop to collect their winnings.

The club and bag raffles are good if they're not overdone. They should be spaced with plenty of discretion.

Multi-Club Jobs

A few years before the war I was impressed by the fine work being done, by pros at small clubs who visited neighboring small clubs where there were no pros. The instruction income and playing

equipment and sportswear sales of these alert men compared very favorably with the earnings of pros at larger clubs. There is a great boom in construction and revival of 9-hole clubs that will make this field of groups of smaller clubs one that will reward energetic pro businessmen.

There'll be many younger fellows coming into pro jobs next year. Some of them who appear to be very promising will fail to make good. They'll forget that being a good pro is primarily work and not play. And some of them won't bear in mind that being a gentleman is one of the most important essentials of correctly and profitably handling a pro job. Consider Horton Smith, Byron Nelson and others of the most conspicuously successful pro businessmen, as examples of how gentlemen get ahead in this business.

The newcomer to the pro job will save himself much distress if he'll remember that drinking is something that very, very few good businessmen do in their offices, and that the club is the pro's office. At times though, it may be good business to join members for a drink, but it should be a soft one. One of the best pieces of advice I ever got from a grand older pro who is beloved by his members and has been for years in a fine job, is that the pro is hired to run an important part of the club's business and not engaged to become practically a member of the club.

Spalding and H. & B. Sponsor World Series Films

★ For a third consecutive year baseball's World Series is "on tour" to thousands of servicemen convalescing in Army and Navy hospitals in this country and thousands more with our occupational forces in Europe and the South Pacific. Sponsored again by A. G. Spalding & Bros. and Hillerich & Bradsby Co., the film records a complete sound picture of the games. Lew Fonseca, promotional director of the American League, headed a crew of 12 cameramen, technicians and electricians, shooting between 18,000 and 25,000 feet of film to make the 2,000 foot two-reel finished product.

Both the 1943 and 1944 World Series pictures were smash hits from the start. Between 500 and 600 prints of the 1944 battle between the St. Louis Browns and St. Louis Cardinals went to all parts of the world, more than 6,000,000 fans viewing the production. Of that total, more than half were servicemen, many at Army and Navy bases throughout the world.

Army and Navy hospitals received the first prints of the series between the Detroit Tigers and the Chicago Cubs.