

Pro Club-fitting Service Is Selling Point to Accent

By CHUCK TANIS

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It is a sure thing that the pros' top position in golf club merchandising is based not only on their expert knowledge of golf club design and construction but on their capacity for exactly fitting clubs to their customers.

I would estimate, from my observation, that inability of the average player to score better often is due to ill-fitting clubs although failure of the players to receive instruction is invariably named as the reason for high scoring. Almost any experienced pro can point out conspicuous cases of average players being unnecessarily handicapped by improperly fitted clubs, which in the great majority of cases are store-bought and purchased without expert guidance.

What members generally don't realize is that the pro often has a greater variety of weights, lengths and shaft specifications in his shop stock than most of the larger stores have. Many a pro has lost a sale

because the player didn't want to wait until the pro could get a factory club exactly suited to the player. That is one of the problems in our business we have to solve.

During the past two seasons the demand for clubs from the leading manufacturers has been such that their custom departments have been unable to handle the demand. This situation is being corrected rapidly so the pro with good manufacturing connections and who has properly impressed his members will again get back into the strongest possible position for dominating the better part of the market.

Clubmaking As Advertising Expense

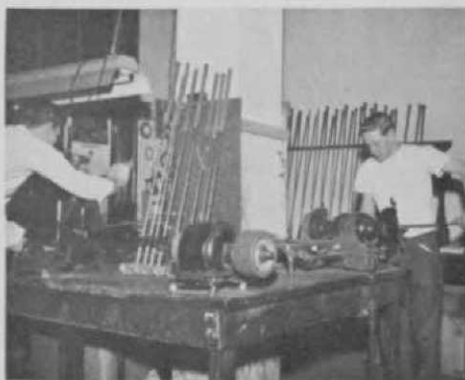
Due to a fortunate combination of circumstances I have been able to do a considerable volume of business on wood clubs, in addition to what I might normally expect, by making woods to order.

Let me tell you, first of all, that it calls for quite an investment. I've got about



Chuck Tanis, Jr. drills a head with a unit of the \$2000 worth of equipment in his dad's shop.

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Richard Scott fits one of the 400 steel shafts in stock into a club made to a member's order.

\$2000 tied up in drills, grinders, hand tools and manufacturing supplies and a good piece of money tied up in shafts, heads and grips. I am not making any more money on my custom-made clubs than I make on factory clubs. The reason I make these clubs is to emphatically advertise my policy of assuring members exact fit whether on custom-made or factory-made clubs.

The forbidding difficulty in making a feature of custom-made clubs is that of getting clubmakers. You have to train youngsters for there are very few older clubmaking craftsmen left. My son, Chuck, Jr., always liked to work around the shop and I had him repairing and reconditioning clubs before he went away for 2½ years in submarine service. Another young man, Richard (Scotty) Scott, who was in charge of the rack room in the summer and worked at repairing and overhauling clubs in the winter, was the other capable one I could assign to clubmaking.

I would have them practice on waste material until they gained command of the correct methods. Some young men simply can't do this work. Clubmaking, whether in the pro shop or in a factory, is still a fine art despite the extensive use of mechanical methods.

Extensive Stock Required

We have two models of woods for women and four models of woods for men. The men's models have two deep-faced models for the better players and two shallow-faced for the higher handicap men. We have to carry in stock all weights of shafts from 3½ oz. to 5½ oz., and about 400 of them.

We also feature factory-made irons to specifications, in addition to the large regular stocks we carry in our sales room and stock. The irons require too much machinery for us to make in our shop with the precision and expert workmanship that must justify the price of a custom-built club.

At present the Park all-weather grip is preferred by about 75% of our customers for custom-made clubs. Making the grip to specifications is quite important and I think that, considering the variations in hand and finger structure of golfers, attention to the grip is one of the points in which the individuality of a custom-made club is most apparent to the buyer.

We believe we have our manufacturing methods and costs so we can operate about as efficiently as possible yet, as I have pointed out, the net profit per club isn't any more than on a factory club and is made only by assuming the load of more work, worry and responsibility.

However the protection of the pro's market and publicizing his set-up and authority in exactly fitting clubs to the customers'

needs makes my club manufacturing worth the risk. In the great majority of cases, due to labor and investment required, the pro is better off to let the manufacturers bear every worry that can be avoided.

One worry the thoughtful professional can't escape is that of letting his reputation as the one thoroughly qualified fitter of clubs get dim in the minds of his members. Keep pounding away on that every chance you get and adjust your stocks accordingly. Pound at the matter so strong and continuously that you'll have members waiting until they can buy from you and be sure of getting exactly what they need. All of them won't wait and you'll lose some sales. But you certainly won't lose as many as you may when the player has the idea that almost any club at any price is good enough for his game.

Hudson Honored By Writers For Contribution to Golf

Robert A. Hudson, packer and grocer of Portland, Ore., has been named by the Golf Writers' Assn. of America as the individual making the most outstanding contribution to the game of golf for the year 1947 and for his service will be the first recipient of the William D. Richardson Memorial Trophy. The award goes to him



The William D. Richardson Memorial Trophy presented by the Golf Writers Assn. of America in recognition of outstanding contribution to golf.

for his untiring efforts in stimulating the game in the Pacific northwest through sponsorship of Open tournaments in Portland, especially the National PGA in 1946. His crowning achievement however came in 1947 when he brought the British Ryder Cup team to this country at a time when it appeared the series might be discontinued.