

# Get The Woman's Slant in for Pepping-up Sales

By HERB GRAFFIS

"Umps" Clark, in his shop in that part of the Miami-Biltmore which the government has turned over to the city of Miami, watched a golfer look over a display of hats, caps and visors on a table. The man had come in, picked out a hat, tried it on and had turned to walk to the cash register to complete the sale. Just then the fellow's wife arrived. She got him back to the display and the customary quick purchase by a man was transformed into a 15-minute shopping inspection and discussion piloted by the wife.

After the sale had been made "Umps" said: "That's what's happening more and more in pro shops all over the country. At private clubs as well as at public courses buying is done more carefully because the women are stronger in the picture. Pros have no reason for complaints about this. If their merchandise is good and priced right and displayed well, the women find out quicker than the men that the pro shop can compete with the down-town stores on quality and price and often beat them in new style items.

"What's more, the pros' own wives by guiding their husbands in the sort of apparel to stock, how much to pay and what sizes and how much to have in the inventory, have accounted for new millions in pro shop income."

There was a lot more along that line that "Umps", Jim Foulis and I discussed as we watched people come into the shop and buy—or what caused more study—not buy.

A few days later I ran across Wilford Wehrle's wife looking around a pro shop while Wilf was talking to some pros. This bright young woman drew a five-figure salary as a buyer of women's wear before she got married.

Her comments on pro merchandising were especially interesting as the thought of one who had succeeded in a keenly competitive business.

## Price Tags Make Sales

"A lot can be done in increasing sales to people who just walk into pro shops to look around, mark their handicap cards or buy a few balls or a package of tees," she said. "In the first place there aren't near-

ly enough price tags prominently shown. You hear pros mentioning increased buyer resistance. Many people think that prices have gone up higher than actually is the case in pro shops and unless the pro shows how much merchandise costs he is sure to lose many sales that might have been made simply by answering the important but unasked question with a price tag."

I checked up on that point by asking a number of pros and with very few exceptions learned that the failure to put price tags on merchandise was due either to sheer neglect or an obsolete idea that prices displayed on pro shop merchandise diminish the "class" look of the place.

This is something I discussed with members of several Florida clubs where the members are wealthy far beyond the average. Men I talked to told me that with the income tax situation what it is these days and club bills plenty high even the loosest spenders are more price-conscious than they've been before. My impression after talking with them was that now the price tag is a very important item at the top private clubs as well as at the pay-as-you-play courses.

One of the noted pros who has been at wealthy clubs as well as at clubs where members' income is average for a good club told me one time that the rich always are hard to sell to. He explained that whatever a wealthy man had he was sure was the best he could get, even if it was a hickory-shafted club the man bought 20 years ago. About the only way this pro or his assistants could sell these smug prospects was to let them use clubs and get results they'd never had with the old equipment.

## Why Miss Price Appeal?

Maybe price wouldn't be a factor in such cases but 99% of the time it is. So why should a pro pass up the 99% when price tags that are attractively designed can be used at such low cost? A pro in upper New York state told me one time that he figured price tags on every item of merchandise in his shop accounted for an increase of \$2,000 a season in his sales. It's time again to think and act about

showing in your shop the prices of your merchandise.

The best job I ever saw done in this way is done by Paul Scott at Griffith park municipal courses at Los Angeles. Scott has price tags bearing, in addition to the price of the item, code data in small figures that enable him to keep an exact perpetual inventory. Without much book-keeping effort Scott and his staff at the close of each day's business know exactly the status of the stock and can tell what to re-order and what isn't moving and needs a push.

### Educate in Price Differences

Besides the price tag factor Mrs. Wehrle brought out another point that may register with pros. She said that pros aren't doing enough to educate buyers in the reasons for differences in prices of clubs. She said that she was amazed, when listening to her husband and pros talking about club design and construction, to learn how many differences there were between clubs.

She isn't the only one who can't tell the difference at sight between a club that costs \$7.50 at retail and one that retails at \$17.50. A lot of pros can't do this and it's not often done by shop assistants. But the difference exists and for good reason. Manufacturers don't make a club then slap on the first price they happen to think of. The selling cost is as small as they can charge and still get by with a profit.

The young business woman suggested that a booklet describing in interesting and concise detail the mechanical features of the club be attached to the club or set. "Or, if the factory doesn't supply such leaflets or booklets, there is nothing to prevent the pro writing his own description and having typewritten or carbon copies attached to the clubs so the prospective buyers may read, inform themselves and arouse purchasing desire while they are looking around the shop," said Mrs. Wehrle. "There are too many wasted opportunities for sales around pro shops."

That could be, although pros these days are pretty much alert to anything that will help make sales. Much of this increased awareness of merchandising needs is the result of a pepping-up of display and selling that came when pros went away to war and their wives had to run the shops. That operation by women, about as much as anything else, put pros good and strong into sports apparel merchandising. The women know materials, workmanship and values of apparel. They are responsible for the standard of pro shop apparel stocks now generally being higher in style appeal and better in value than stocks at the down-town shops where

the retail buyers are men who are not informed or fussy about real values.

When that wartime influence of women in pro shops was beginning to get strong I thought there might be a tendency to make the pro shops too fancy and lose the subtle masculine appeal. But everywhere a pro's wife had something to do with the shop I saw the shop looking brighter, cleaner, more orderly and more appealing to men, as well as to women, golfers.

### What to Spend on Shop?

Most pro shops are difficult to fix up to the extent needed for effective merchandising. Paint, lights, curtains, new display fixtures (especially tables) and rugs will do a lot. Sometimes the pro hesitates to spend on the shop the money that's needed to make it look like every detail of the club property should. He can spend his own money, representing the profit on a considerable volume of sales, and then have club politics as engineered by a couple of members, prevent renewal of his contract. Just what percent of a pro's prospective profit can be justifiably spent on shop improvements that a pro can't take with him always will be debatable. But that, like many other phases of pro merchandising, comes closer to solution when the pro talks the situation over with his wife.

Get your wife interested in your pro shop selling problems and she'll be able to give you a lot of valuable advice. The greatest experts in the world keep trying to sell her. They've educated her at your expense. Get some of it back.

### Crosby Honored



The "Bing" is inducted into "the most exclusive golf club in America" (membership is limited to golfers who have made holes-in-one) as he receives medal from Ivan Brisbane, western golf ball mgr., U. S. Rubber Co., for shooting hole-in-one on the tough par 3 hole on Cypress Point Course.