



In pro shop at Medinah CC (Chicago dist.) Asst. Pro Tom Cullinan, fits a member with golf shoes in corner of pro shop where shoe display and stock attracts business.

Shoe Business As Profit Maker for the Pro

By ERNIE SABRAYAC

Golf shoes are the greatest "sleepers market" afforded the golf professionals today. Now, where the pent-up demand for playing equipment has receded to the normal stage but where the cost of operating a golf shop has not, there has to be a filler to take up the gap. The pro can take up that slack with shoe business which is just as natural to his selling as balls and clubs.

It takes no recalling of history to explain how the golf professional switched the retailing of fine golf equipment from establishments downtown to the professional shops. The word "professional" has come to mean what the word implies and as a result the pro is now the doctor for your member's ills and needs. The same reasoning and sales efforts behind the sale of golf shoes will elevate the pro

into that enviable position you now hold in the sale of other equipment.

The natural reasons for selling shoes in a pro shop has been grasped already by many pros and the increased sales from year to year has become a big part of pro income. But for the pro who hasn't tested this new venture I am going to try to lay down some rules to follow. If you adhere to them you will find yourself with a brand new income.

Rules for Shoe Buying

First, you must definitely "buy" right. That means that you must go along with merchandising policies that you follow in the regular purchase of your balls, clubs, etc. Your first job is to be sure you buy "Quality," for the first sale that you make is the big test. A lot of pros will immediately say some shoes are too high

and can't be sold. How can you reconcile that with the fact that practically all merchandise sold through the pro shop today is quality and quality today means a high price tag. When a member buys shoes, he wants quality along with the rest of his equipment. Remember, golf is his hobby and if he's a natural sportsman he wants the best for his afternoons of relaxation. Anyone who ever has had sore feet from a poor pair of shoes has made up his mind that any price is not too high for foot comfort.

After quality you must be competitive. That means buying from a manufacturer of shoes. Everyone today is price-minded and too much of a distribution mark-up in the price of shoes will make the shoes too costly.

Then there is style as an important factor. It becomes increasingly clear every day that the best way to part a member from his hard earned cash is to offer him something new in styling; something a little different than has been offered in the past. Try to select your supplier from the standpoint that if a member wants something that is entirely different from regular stock pattern, the manufacturer will be in a position to supply it. Copies of shoes worn by today's leading stars of the links have been sought after by many members. After you have selected your shoe for style, quality and competitiveness, then your problem is how to buy and what to buy and this is the most important element of all. It is the bug-a-boo that has caused a lot of pros to shy away from the shoe business before they ever get started. It looks like a big job but really is not.

Selecting the Stock

First of all, the easiest way to sell shoes is to have a stock. We have found that a pro can set himself up in the shoe business with about 30 pairs of shoes at the average club. Most pros make the mistake of buying these shoes in several styles instead of concentrating the bigger part of the shoes in two styles. A plain brown or tan and a two-tone. For example, if you size these two chosen styles in the "gut," which is the vernacular of the shoe man, which means that the numbers are to be stocked in popular sizes only, you then put yourself in a position to deliver shoes right away. That is most important. We suggest that you stock each number with one pair from size 8½ through size 11. Also, steer clear from stocking widths other than C or D. That means that if you have stocked the two styles selected as suggested you then have a size set-up that shoe manufacturers' records show should allow you to start delivering shoes right away.

A lot of fellows ask, what about the guy with size 12AA, etc.? That goes back to the selection of the source of your shoes; pick a source that carries shoes in stock for your needs as you would pick a club manufacturer for the same purpose. Remember, chances are that the same customer wanting that odd size would have to wait for it at his favorite shoe store and that customer expects to wait for that odd size.

The idea is that if you have a stock of shoes on hand, then an explanation that his size is out of stock at the moment satisfies him as he sees that you are in the shoe business and in a position to get his size quickly.

You now see that the basis of stock of your basic stock styles is 26 pairs to round out the 30 pairs mentioned. Buy sample pairs of four other styles to show. Buy



Frank Walsh (R), pro at Red Run GC (Detroit dist.) fits club pres., Paul Carrick, from a profitable corner of Red Run's shop.



Shoes make a display that fits in the well run shop at Plum Hollow GC (Detroit dist.). Pro Bill Uzela (R) shows a shoe out of stock to mgr. "Red" Large while member Ed Lauer looks over a shoe he fancies.

these also in popular sizes to be able to deliver if the customer takes a fancy to them. It is not feasible to stock every style and a customer will wait for a shoe that is different. Remember, though, to sample shoes that are in manufacturer's stock so that they can be delivered quickly.

Another main point is to have this stock on hand at the opening of the season. This is just as important as having your initial order of clubs, etc., at this time as this is when the customer's enthusiasm for buying is at its peak.

Now that you have the stock carefully selected and sized accordingly, the problem of selling the shoe comes next. Always sell the quality features of the shoes first. Your supplier will undoubtedly acquaint you with all these items when he sells the shoes to you. Then the big thing is to fit the shoes correctly. In that respect, your supplier also will give you hints as to how that is done. A lot of pros have bought automatic measuring devices which have helped them not only in fitting shoes but has added a distinctive air of the shoe business to the pro shop and gives the customer added confidence that the shoe is being fitted properly. The next tip is to always be sure that the shoes are large enough. For example, if a customer wears a 9½B

in street shoes it is entirely possible that a 10B would be more comfortable in golf shoes for the reason that most people wear a heavy golf sock. Keep in mind

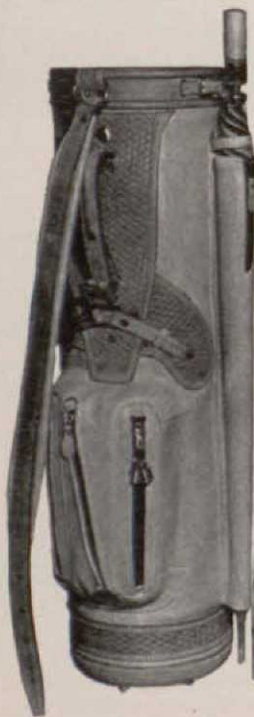


Ernie Sabayrac, Golf Promotion Representative, Field & Flint.

that sizing of shoes can be flexible although most quality manufacturers use a last in making golf shoes that allows for those things. If you fit a customer properly in a quality shoe you can count on him being a customer of yours for a long time. After you have sold your first pair it is imperative that you re-order that particular size right away so that you can keep your stock up. That is the most important item that faces the pro; always having a representative stock of shoes on hand. In seasonal jobs it would be my suggestion that you stop re-ordering for stock around August 1st, thereby allowing your stock to dribble down to practically nothing and what is left to be used as a basic stock to size in for the coming spring.

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that many club members own 2 pairs of golf shoes, but own only one golf bag. That means that the chances of selling a pair of shoes should be greater than selling a golf bag every year.

2—It has also been proven that sports-wear of all descriptions can be sold in the pro shop when it is styled right and competitive, the same holds true with shoes.

3—Your member would rather buy these shoes from you because he has found out that your advice in other matters pertaining to golf merchandise has been "Professional" advice and therefore is reliable.

4—The fact that everyone that steps off your first tee has a pair of golf shoes on definitely makes that player your natural customer for shoes as well as clubs and balls.

5—Shoes are a profit item that you cannot afford to overlook.

PORTABLE PRO SHOP BUILDS SALES AT GOLF TOURNAMENTS



View of the outdoor pro shop during the Tam O'Shanter (Chicago district) championship tournaments last August. This method of merchandise display gives the public an opportunity to see the latest of the finest in golf equipment and accessories. Johnny Spence originated the idea of employing this "open" pro shop type of display for the benefit of the public attending major tournaments. At PGA sponsored events Spence takes complete charge of the tent for the home pro. The merchandise of approximately 40 manufacturers was represented in the Tam pro shop tent including: Wilson, Spalding, MacGregor, Acushnet, Burke, Kroydon, Jackman, Rutledge, Great Lakes, Walter Hagen, U. S. Rubber, Florsheim Shoe, Foot-Joy Shoes, and various sports-wear representatives.

Wilson did O.K. in ball and club use and prize awards of Wilson equipment in San Francisco Examiner's hole-in-one contest which drew more than 3,600 contestants and in Niagara Rapids AC ace contest held at Hyde Park GC, Niagara Falls, N.Y. Harry Hayward, director of SF Examiner tournament for 17 years, says history of the competition discloses that odds against a hole-in-one are 15,704 to 1.

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