

Tips for Architects in Pro Shop Planning

By AL ZIMMERMAN

Professional, Alderwood CC, Portland, Ore.

The pro shop location generally is an architectural afterthought although functionally it is one of the highly important elements of design of golf club facilities. It often has seemed to be the notion that the pro shop can be put in almost anywhere inasmuch as it is merely a place at which the pro has golf goods for sale and where he stores members' clubs. Greatly increased development of pro shop merchandising as an expert service that gives members a return on their initiation fees and dues, and a concentration of many phases of members' playing activity in the pro shop, such as handicap records and club competition pairings, have made the pro shop a vital point in club operations.

For members' convenience and service the pro shop should be located on a route that is most logical and shortest from the locker-rooms to the first tee. Formerly it was quite satisfactory if the pro shop was convenient only to the men's locker-room but the rapidly growing play of women, and their demands to have high rating in club planning and operations, now makes it wise to consider location of the pro shop with respect to the women's locker-room.

Two-Door Planning

Ideally the pro shop should be located and designed so the easiest possible way to the first tee would be in one door, then through the entire length of pro shop display and out another door to the first tee. I cannot emphasize this two-door planning any too strongly because it is the only way in which player traffic en route to the first tee can be exposed to pro shop services and merchandise that are there for one main purpose—to make the round of golf more enjoyable to every player. The pro's volume of business is secondary to the players' pleasure, although every pro knows that his business is directly proportionate to how much his members enjoy their golf.

Pro shop selling at the better clubs must be done on a basis of exposing the merchandise attractively to the customer—and as a service proposition. The pro knows, but the architect or club officials don't realize, that even on such an item of pro shop merchandise as a hat or cap, display can be a very valuable service at the right time. Along comes a blistering hot day and

a fellow who is bald—or whose thatch is very thin—races hatless out to the first tee to join others of his foursome. About the twelfth hole his scalp is blistered and for several days he's suffering. The pro knows this is going to happen each and every summer, but could he say to the unsuspecting victim, "You ought to wear one of these caps or hats out there today"? Not many of us could; it would be just our luck to make the suggestion in all kindness to some member or guest who is very sensitive about being nude on top. We have to depend on display of merchandise protecting our customers.

Another thing about the pro shop, which influences shop location and layout, is the fact that seldom can more than one man be in attendance at the shop. At the rush times, the pro or his assistant, may be on the first tee starting events, giving a lesson to some member who insists on that particular time at the lesson tee, back at the bag racks on some errand a member wanted done immediately, or trying his best to help a member select one single ball of a half dozen brands while another member is showing signs of being interested in the purchase of a \$100 outfit of clubs.

The pro and his assistants want to—and must—be of cheerful, helpful and impartial service to each of the members, their wives, children and guests. Shop location and design must help the pro achieve this ambition.

Plenty of Display Space

In the modern pro shops at the better clubs you now are seeing plenty of wall space for allowing display of merchandise at eye level. Many pros can tell of having a \$5,000 to \$15,000 investment in stock for service to their members without having display facilities adequate to let the members see what is available for them.

Another thing that is getting to be an essential at the well designed pro shop is some space for a shoe department, with a comfortable chair where the player can take his—or her—time in ease while the desired style of shoe is being perfectly fitted.

It's also necessary that there be room for table display of merchandise; particu-

larly wearing apparel. Women always want to shop around, feel and examine golf apparel, whether or not they buy. Men are less inclined to be careful, but you have to get the men by displaying the merchandise so prominently they can't miss it.

This open display, changed for ladies' days, and for weather, especially on days that are wet underfoot or threaten rain, should be in the center of the pro sales room.

Stock storage space should be provided convenient to the merchandise displayed so if the size desired isn't on display it can be almost immediately brought forth. That's the kind of service a first class club member has the right to expect for what he's paying to belong to the club. He may be on his way to spend three or four hours leisurely playing golf but when he's on his way to the first tee he wants action lightning fast in the pro shop.

Often the architects have seemed to forget entirely that the pro is in a business and must handle a lot of paperwork, such as tournament scores, business records and correspondence, to do a thoroughly good job for the club. This calls for some sort of office space, located where the pro could see the shop, the first tee, and if possible the doors of the shop, but still have some privacy.

Light is Important

Light is a very important factor in the pro shop. Golf goods are for outdoor use and the bright outdoor appearance should be maintained as far as possible in the pro shop, preferably by large windows but, as a substitute, with well designed artificial lighting. The windows must have burglar-proof screening on the inside.

The location of the ball case, the sales counter, the club racks, the caddy department, the caddy quarters and now the cart storage space, all have to be carefully considered in planning the pro shop. Another thing that I believe could have much more thought is the location of the handicap card rack where members will be encouraged to post their scores and see the scores and handicaps of other members. This rack has great possibilities for increasing the number of lessons the pro and his assistant give and bettering the standard of play by all members.

When the architect understands the functions of the pro department and its problems in trying to be of utmost service and satisfaction to members, he should be very helpful in coming up with something much nearer to the perfect pro shop than any of us ever have seen. However, the case usually is that the architect never gets full information on what the pro shop is supposed to be until it's too late and about the best that can be expected in most cases is a remodeling job which is bound to be an improvement.

Wm. Johnson Heads S. Calif. Supts.

By ED ROACH

The scene was the dining room of the fashionable Los Angeles CC. The green-keeping supts. had finished a morning round of golf over the tailored and tough north course, had enjoyed a sumptuous lunch, and were about to elect their officers for the new year. Bill Stewart, the association's first president from way back in 1926, then pulled out yellowed newspaper clippings reporting the contrasting first meeting of the local supts. The accounts told that the meeting had been held in the barn of the Brentwood CC. One report related that the eight men in working clothes gathered in that barn would accomplish great things for the future of golf in Southern California. How correct that reporter was is indicated by the high perfection of local courses and by present scope of association activities.

Following officers were elected for 1950:

Wm. Johnson (Supt., L. A. Mundy courses), Pres.

Wm. Malcolm (Supt., Annandale), VP.

Alan MacDonald (Supt., Rancho), Sec.-Treas.

In taking office Bill Johnson reviewed some of the accomplishments of the association during the last three years under the presidency of Bill Beresford. Beresford was highly praised for his cooperative work with C. C. Simpson of the Southern Calif. Golfers Ass'n, in promoting and financing the Turf Research Foundation at U.C.L.A. which is already showing valuable results under the direction of Dr. V. T. Stoutemyer. Bill was also commended highly for his part in bringing the National Conference to Los Angeles in 1949 and for running a ship shape organization during his tenure of office.

At the meeting, Dr. Miller, U.C.L.A. plant pathologist, discussed turf fungicide trials, and Dr. Hallowell, Penn. State turf specialist, spoke on his continuing survey of Calif. golf courses.

Wm. P. Bell, golf architect, was present and accepted an honorary life membership in the association.

Park Executives' Annual Meet in Dallas, Sept. 25-28

The annual convention of the American Institute of Park Executives will be held at the Baker Hotel, Dallas, Texas, Sept. 25-28, inclusive. In conjunction will be held annual sessions of the Institute's affiliate, the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums. For details, write Frank L. Brunckhorst, Executive Secretary, American Institute of Park Exec., 30 North LaSalle St., Chicago 2, Ill.