

Manufacturers See Promising Year For Golf in 1951

Manufacturers of golf goods in looking forward to pro business prospects for 1951 take cautious views but agree that the pros will probably do as well as almost any type of retail business next year.

Comment on business and production in 1951:

UNITED STATES RUBBER CO., Providence, R. I.—G. T. McCarthy, Mgr. Golf Ball Sales makes the following comment:

"For the merchandise-minded golf professional, the 1950 season was profitable. The season was unusual as it got away to a very slow start due to an unusually cold spring but wound up in a strong seller's market brought about by current world conditions. Unless unforeseen conditions exist, 1951 looks like a very promising year for golf. The hard-working, ambitious pros will see to it that a greater share of the large golf equipment market will go to them through better displays and better merchandising.

"There is more interest in golf today than during any time in its entire history. The golf equipment manufacturers have stayed abreast of that interest by providing the best merchandise ever offered to the golfing public. Another factor of utmost importance is that the country is enjoying unusually high employment. That means more money in circulation, a full share of which will be spent in the pro shop.

"The U. S. Rubber Company will merchandise through the golf pro shop a complete and improved line of golf balls during the late fall in Florida and the southern states, and during the 1951 golf season throughout the country. The U. S. Royal 'special' Golf Ball, an extra high compression ball for the accurate, long hitter; the U. S. Royal (Blue) for the pro and expert amateur who want a distance ball with a slightly softer compression; and U. S. Royal (Red) golf ball built for the golfer who desires extra durability but good distance.

"The U. S. Royal Brands are made with an improved type of Silicone, wound on new, modern machines equipped with an electronic device that controls the tension resulting in a more uniform compression product than ever before. Electronic winding is an exclusive 'US' patented

feature, taking years to develop and is an outstanding manufacturing development. All three types of U. S. Royal golf balls retail for \$1.00 each. For the golfer who seeks economy in the price of his playing equipment U. S. offers the U. S. Fairway, a ball, which because of its wide acceptance, is known as 'The Golf Ball With A Million Friends'. The U. S. Fairway is retailed for 75c each. To round out the line for the pro shop, U. S. offers the U. S. Nobby, an extra-durable, economical ball that retails for 60c each.

"The 'US' golf ball line from top to bottom will be packaged in new compact boxes that have strong eye appeal. To further aid the pro to make 1951 bigger than ever, 'US' will provide new, attractive wall posters, improved U. S. Royal score cards, and a well-planned advertising program that should create greater consumer demand for U. S. Royal golf balls. The company will continue its Pro-Only policy on all U. S. Royal brands of golf balls."

WILSON SPORTING GOODS CO., Chicago, Ill.—Fred Bowman, Wilson's pres., says—"The outlook for golf equipment in 1951 is very good at the present time, but in view of the uncertainty of the war situation, anything can happen."

Bowman adds:

"Although production capacity of steel and rubber is now about double what it was in 1940-41, it is our feeling if an all-out war should come, the demands for raw materials and man-power will be much greater than in World War II. The principal materials used in the production of golf equipment are steel, rubber, wood with secondary materials such as leather, lead, aluminum and brass. With the exception of wood, all will take a No. 1 priority in case of an all-out war.

"We do not have more than a 60 to 90 day supply of raw materials on hand due to the large cash investment necessary to maintain such a stock. Prices on many materials are extremely high, and we do not want to gamble too far on future market conditions.

"Even if we should have a large inventory, if the war situation should become more acute, we would probably be faced with government restrictions in the production of golf equipment and our

products would be 'frozen' for the duration.

"The rubber order which is effective through December reduces use of natural rubber by about 17%. We cannot determine at this time how this will affect golf balls, but we believe there will be as many top and medium-priced golf balls in 1951 as in 1950.

"It is our keen desire to hold our selling prices to the minimum. The advances on golf balls, clubs and bags have been very small although the costs of materials and labor have advanced a great deal. Rubber has tripled in cost, but top grade golf balls have advanced only five cents each in price. Top grade irons have increased \$5.00 per set of eight clubs whereas costs warrant a much greater rise in price. It is our feeling we should operate on a safe basis—not do any hoarding or gambling on the future."

A. G. SPALDING & BROS. Inc., New York—Charles F. Robbins, president, says that with the nation probably facing a long period of maintaining a large armament program, golf professionals and other merchants should carry reasonable stocks to properly service their markets but Robbins does not think it necessary to overstock at this time. Nevertheless, Robbins adds, it would be a mistake for any merchant to depend too much on manufacturers' stocks.

The Spalding president says there are no indications that there will be restrictions that would seriously curtail manufacture of golf clubs and balls but as conditions may change at any time and nobody can accurately forecast what limitations may be imposed, the best that can be done is to adjust to conditions as they develop.

Robbins says the recent order covering consumption of rubber for September, October and November will have no adverse effect on golf ball production during that period, as far as he can see. He also says there are no limitations on use of steel or leather that would restrict golf club production.

MacGREGOR GOLF CO., Cincinnati, Ohio—Henry P. Cowen, pres., says any well informed businessman's guess is as good as his on what the status of the golf business or any other business will be six months from now, considering unsettled conditions.

However, Cowen adds, already removed from the realm of uncertainties are facts that there will be a shortage of skilled labor in golf goods plants and there will be an increase in prices. Some labor will be greeted by Uncle Sam and older skilled workers will switch to what are classified as essential industries.

Comparatively recent increases in prices of raw materials for clubs have been from 15% to 25%, and crude rubber is up more than 100% from the price earlier this year. The manufacturers will have to accept orders at prices prevailing at time of shipment, Cowen says, and the buyers who order early probably will get a break by having orders filled in sequence of receipt.

The National Production Authority's orders to curb hoarding of materials used in the manufacture of clubs and some golf accessories still gives the golf industry a chance to produce civilian products without getting knocked out as in 1942, Cowen believes.

He reports that 1950 has been the biggest year of MacGregor Golf's history and indications are that if production can be maintained in complete coordination with the armament program the 1951 MacGregor sales should set another record. Cowen also says:

"Highlighting the MacGregor line for exclusive pro distribution in 1951 are the new, improved Tourney golf balls, and 'MT' Tourney, Tommy Armour, Byron Nelson and Louise Suggs golf clubs in a comprehensive selection of models, shaft flexes and price ranges. Several improved features have been incorporated which have been enthusiastically received since the line's initial showing, including a new No. 11 Double Duty Iron as a companion utility club in the "MT" series.

"Twelve different types of putters are available, six of which are new developments and are being offered for the first time in 1951.

"In golf bags, more than 20 attractive and practical Tufhorse models are being featured, including a complete series each in nylon, canvas and leather, as well as the original and exclusive Pax-style bags with individual club compartments.

"Golf accessories have also received their share of attention, with complete restyling of the head cover and glove line, umbrellas and a new nylon practice ball bag in assorted colors."

ACUSHNET PROCESS SALES COMPANY, New Bedford, Mass.—"These are hectic days with regard to the production and sale of golf balls," states F. W. Bommer, president. "Even before the Korean war took place, I am glad to report that Acushnet sales were substantially ahead of 1949's record-breaking year. Since the Korean War we, like most every other ball maker, have been hard put to fill orders. It is assumed that this demand is due to actual consumer purchasing by players who remembered the extreme ball shortage during the last war. In some cases, some of the professionals have

built up inventories with this same point in mind.

"The Government's edict to restrict the use of natural rubber helped to foster panic-buying. It seems to us, however, that although there is no substitute for natural rubber in golf ball thread, the actual requirements of the entire industry for this item is of such a small fraction of the total natural rubber output, ways and means may be found to make available this quantity of the natural rubber product.

"During the past season we developed a very interesting promotion medium in our new miniature driving machine that we mount inside of a Cadillac convertible to demonstrate the flight and performance of Acushnet golf balls. We have three of these machines in operation, and we know that their performances are viewed with considerable interest. We do not make comparisons between different makes of golf balls, but confine ourselves to the demonstration of various type of flights—driving the balls easily more than 400 yards carry. We think these machines help to stimulate increased interest in golf which is something we all want.

"We expect to make our regular complete line of golf balls for 1951, provided the Government does not curtail production."

WALTER HAGEN DIVISION, Grand Rapids, Mich.—E. P. "Ed" Rankin, gen. mgr. says,

"The 1951 Hagen Line will provide American's golf professionals with the best balanced line ever to bear Hagen's name. The Hagen Ultra Iron enjoyed a sale this year beyond our fondest hopes and slight improvements have been made on this model as a result of suggestions from some of our pro customers. The Sir Walter Iron has also been considerably improved. A brand new iron has been developed for the fair sex and will be known as the American Lady, this model being new in every respect.

"Our Wood Club line has also been greatly improved and our Haig Model and Jet Model which were outstanding successes this year, have been changed only in so far as head finish and sole plates are concerned. We have a brand new model to be known as the Custom which we feel will certainly take its place along with the Haig and Jet Models for it embodies those characteristics that are popular for present day golf, having a driver with reasonably deep face and shallow easy playing fairway clubs.

"An entirely new model putter to be known as the Black-Jack will be introduced. It is a mallet type aluminum putter with a lustrous jet black finish, with markings in gold. This is a very un-

usual appearing putter which not only has a very nice appearance but which will be outstanding in performance.

"All models in the top line again carry the fine red leather grip, but for 1951 a gold spiral line will be featured as well as Hagen's name in gold. This will follow out the program started last fall of using gold markings on the Hagen Line wherever possible. All in all, the Hagen Division is looking for the 1951 business to surpass our 1950 sales."

BURTON MANUFACTURING CO., INC., Jasper, Alabama—J. R. Burton, Jr., Sec.-Treas., reports—"There are two notable innovations in our 1951 line of golf bags. One is the material known as Lumite. This material is made of woven Saran filaments with a neoprene backing. Saran is derived from petroleum and brine. The finished material known as Lumite is exceedingly tough from the standpoint of tensile strength. It is also very difficult to scratch, and retains its natural sheen even after months of use. The colors in the Lumite are built in. Each filament is extruded with the colors already in it, and they do not fade or rub off. We believe that the material has a wonderful future in the golf bag field.

"Another new item in the 1951 line is a new design in a leather top for the club slots on a compartment style bag. By cutting and assembling the piece of leather in a very novel way we can use a heavy, substantial piece of leather for the flute top without decreasing space at the top of the slots where the club is inserted. This new arrangement also gives a very durable construction and attractive appearance.

"We will, of course, continue to make high quality, attractive and durable golf bags in Nylon, Canvas and Leather."

STUMPP & WALTER CO., New York—Vice president Alex E. Sehmeyer expects "grass seed markets in 1951 to be about the same as they were during spring of 1950. During the late summer and early fall, a serious shortage developed in some of the grasses and prices advanced sharply, with every indication that the increases would be maintained, as the market was bare and harvest and other costs had advanced considerably, but with seeds moving more freely into the market the last few weeks, there has been somewhat of a decline in prices and we believe increases over spring 1950 will be only slight, compared to what they were this fall.

"Although there are developments in new grasses for golf turf, particularly the Merion or B 27 Blue Grass, the supplies are very limited and there are still no commercial quantities available. Merion

Blue Grass seems to have considerable merit. We expect to have limited quantities of Zoysia, which has also shown up very well in many trials, particularly for tee work and while it is a semi-tropical grass, it has done well in the northern climates.

"There has been some difficulty in getting supplies of many golf course items, particularly in the way of equipment for turf maintenance, due to the shortage of steel; this is also true of some other products, but with the situation in Korea improving, we believe there will be sufficient supplies available next spring. However, for those clubs that can arrange their budgets and are in dire need of mowing equipment or other materials of this type, we suggest getting these items in now instead of waiting later. Prices certainly will not be any lower."

Hold Fourth Annual Field Day and Conference at Tifton

The fourth annual Southeastern Turf Conference was opened with a welcome by Geo. H. King, Director Georgia Coastal Plains Experiment Station and Geo. P. Donaldson, President Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, at Tifton, Georgia, on September 7 and 8 in conjunction with Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and the Georgia Coastal Plains Experiment Station, Tifton, Ga.

The foundation for this program was laid in 1936 when the U. S. Department of Agriculture in cooperation with the Georgia Coastal Plains Experiment Station launched an extensive grass breeding program in an effort to solve some of the pasture problems in this area. In the fall of 1946 a cooperative turf research program was begun at Tifton under the stimulus of Dr. Fred V. Grau, Director of the U. S. Golf Association Greens Section. In the winter of 1948 a research fellowship was granted Mr. B. P. Robinson who has now been employed as a permanent member of the staff devoting his full time to the extensive turf research program now in progress.

The contributions from Golf Clubs and Associations in this area and particularly the Southern Golf Association, have made this appointment and the continuation of this program possible.

Although it is seldom realized, more people in the Southeastern United States are concerned with grass for turf than any other agricultural crop. For instance, a few of these interests might be enumerated as follows: home owners are faced with the problem of establishing and maintaining lawns under extreme variations of environmental conditions; good quality turf on golf courses, play grounds and athletic fields add both to the enjoyment and health

of our populace. The effectiveness of turf in economically stabilizing road shoulders is vastly under-emphasized. The tremendous demands for turf by the commercial airlines and military services are often overlooked.

All scientists in the field of agriculture agree that no field of agriculture research has been so completely neglected as the field of turf production. A multitude of problems arise daily for which there is no definite solution. Only research can provide the answers for such problems. In short, the purpose of the Southeastern Turf Foundation can be expressed in these few words, "Better Turf" for the Southeastern United States.

Since the beginning of the annual turf conferences the attendance and interest has grown to the proportions of a snow ball gaining size and momentum as it is rolled down hill. Even during the adverse weather conditions the attendance at the Fourth Annual Conference was well over 150 representing at least 15 states.

The morning session was devoted to a discussion of the fundamentals of how grasses grow. Dr. Glenn W. Burton, the able agronomist responsible for the turf investigations at Tifton, discussed the physiological aspects of how grasses grow. He stressed the leaf as a good factory and emphasized the importance of the simple sugars produced by them. Without an ample supply of this raw building product, all other growth functions stop. R. L. Carter then discussed soil testing as a means of taking an inventory of the soil as a source of the mineral nutrients needed by growing plants. He was followed by



Group of more than 150 attending Field Day at Tifton, Ga.

B. P. Robinson, who demonstrated plant tissue tests and discussed their practical value. Dr. Fred V. Grau talked about soil, water, and air relationships in his usual effective and entertaining manner. The morning concluded with a Kodachrome review of turf in the Bermuda section by O. J. Noer. A down to earth discussion was held whereby each member of the conference had a chance to ask questions and have them discussed by people of experience. Mr. T. M. Baumgardner, Sea Island, Georgia, acted as discussion leader during this question box. A tour of the turf experiments and demonstrations was conducted by Dr. Glenn W. Burton and B. P. Robinson.