

# Pros Exchange Stocks to Reduce Inventories

A high rating of club pros as retail merchants is justified by the way they're handling two difficult merchandising problems. One problem is that of late season selling and the other is that of moving an abnormal amount of golf playing equipment bought when the war situation contained the possible threat of curtailment of club and ball manufacture.

With the lesson of World War II shortages fresh in mind most of the pro buying, in excess of normal, was caused simply by a desire to assure continued play. There wasn't much of a cash speculative angle in the buying, which would result in getting the pro in wrong with his members and risk his job.

GOLFDOM has received reports from representative first-class businessmen in pro golf on the present merchandising situation. This information follows.

**Orville Chapin, Ft. Wayne (Ind.) CC**  
advises:

"I am a conservative buyer and from my records I get a pretty good idea of the sets of clubs, dozens of balls, shirts, bags, etc., I will be able to sell. So I never go hay-wire in buying.

"I did lay in a stock of clubs, bags and balls for almost two years last fall but with the war situation I felt justified in doing so. And I had the money to pay for them and not be pinched. I did watch purchases where I felt that models might be changed.

"We have a table in the center of the display goods floor where shirts and hats are on display. There I put a 'close-out' sign on any merchandise that doesn't move and there always are customers looking for bargains.

"If my wife believes the shop stock has too many dresses she cuts the prices on them 20 per cent after Aug. 1 and sells them quickly.

"Most of my trade-in clubs go to caddies and former caddies who play at the fee courses. Now and then we have young members who are carefully staying within their means and we try to fix them up with good used clubs. I find that we gain considerable good will that way.

"My sales in July this year have been better than usual and part of this business is from steady work on prospects. My wife helps in the shop and is a fine saleswoman. She leaves the club selling to me but she makes notes on those who seem to be interested in buying new clubs and I follow up.

"I may have a bit too large inventory of clubs and balls but I doubt that they will be cheaper next year."

**James D. Fogerty, Sunset CC, Sappington, Mo.**

"Clubs I get as trade-ins I dispose of to my caddies. However, some St. Louis district private club professionals sell their trade-ins to professionals at public courses where there is a great demand for used equipment.

"I do not run any pro shop clearance sales because I feel that cutting prices is dangerous. First; when you begin to cut prices you invariably start a price war. Second; a professional must make a legitimate profit on his merchandise if he is going to be successful, and private club pros are expected by their members to maintain a standard price on equipment and to make a fair profit.

"Here in the St. Louis district the professionals are working together to reduce their inventories. When they are in need of clubs, balls, shoes, bags, etc., they telephone other professionals and pick up the necessary items. In that way they can get the merchandise and deliver it the same day. This allows them to give excellent service and at the same time reduce the district's over-all pro inventory. This plan is working to decided mutual advantage.

"I feel that we do not have to run sales at our clubs in order to do a good volume of business from Aug. 1 to Jan. 1, providing we:

"Check equipment in our club-cleaning racks and determine what condition our members' clubs, bags, head-covers, etc., are in. Then write a letter to the member advising of the condition and suggesting replacing old equipment with certain items of merchandise we have in stock. This is a service to members and stimulates sales.

"Conduct blind bogey tournaments using slow-moving merchandise as prizes.

"Send letters to members suggesting golf equipment as prizes and birthday gifts.

"Give assistants a bonus on their sales of clubs and bags."

The disposal of trade-ins, which is becoming more important as prices of clubs increase, is to a considerable extent to caddies. The lads are golf-minded, they've got a fair amount of money, they know bargains in golf equipment, and the pros want to encourage their play.

**Arthur West, North Andover (Mass.)**

CC says his ex-caddies who now work at other jobs but can't afford new clubs, get most of his trade-ins. He says they look to him for something good. He adds that they have done him a good turn and he tries to reciprocate.

West says that late season tournaments, especially an invitation tournament at the end of September, enable him to sell a lot of balls. His week-end sweepstakes ball credits are good for credit up to Christmas.

**Wint Christianson, Highland CC, St. Paul:**

"I cut my usual buying several months ago. I have dropped several slower moving items and brands and will continue to do so until my stock is more in line.

"I re-ordered summer hot weather items in smaller quantities and that proved satisfactory as I got quick delivery this season. I'm not going to buy close-outs for next year selling, as I have done previously.

"In selling clubs lessons are by far the best club sales stimulant. Lessons are the easiest thing a pro has to sell. Here the season is so short it is impossible to do the lesson market full justice. I have found that getting the appointment into the book whenever I am talking lessons is highly important. Getting them started is something like getting a fellow to start at the dentist's. The patient needs it but is inclined to put it off unless a definite date is made. Then, after you get him started, you can give him more time when it's available.

"Sales for used clubs fall off much earlier than for new clubs. Any inquiry for used

clubs I list by name, telephone, type of clubs desired and price the buyer is willing to pay. It's very easy for me to dispose of used clubs, without interfering with new club sales, as the season opens, so I don't mind carrying over a few sets.

"I try to get the member to dispose of his own used clubs by suggesting that their children, some other relatives or friends would like to have the chance to play. I also used quite a few of the traded-in sets as rental clubs. I mark the rental clubs with colored Scotch tape to prevent switching.

"The price increase after we ordered last fall hurt, especially on public courses. Stocks also were upset by getting some items that had been on order 10 months.

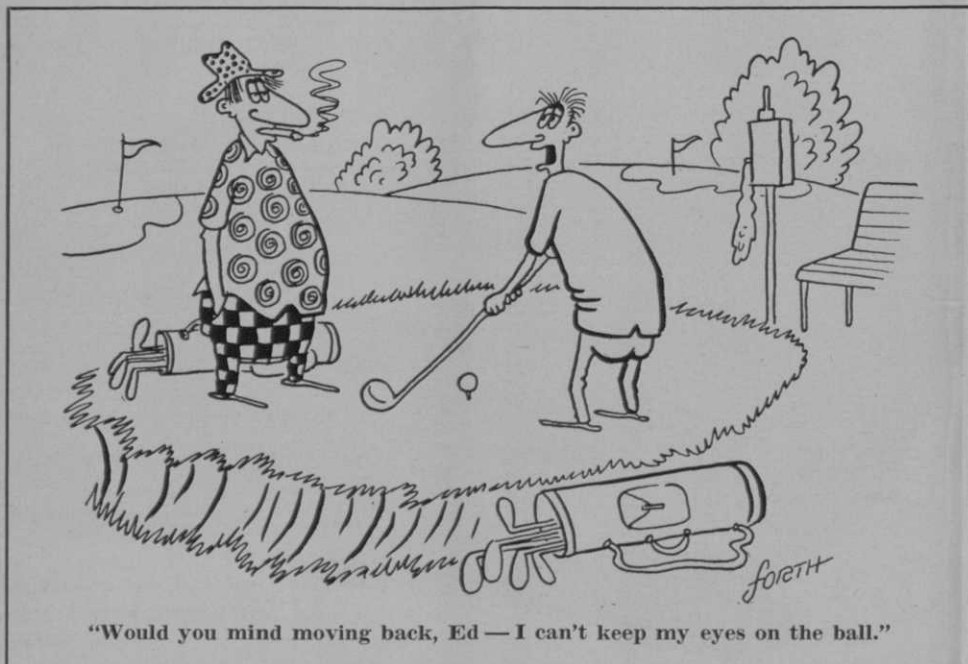
"The Twin City pros exchange clubs from their stocks when buyers can't find exactly what they want in any one shop, and that's helped to keep inventories down."

The exchange of items of shop stock between pros in various districts is getting to be a big thing in converting merchandise into cash from mid-summer on. In Chicago and some other districts manufacturers' salesmen are active in promoting this exchange and getting their pro customers' stocks in good shape.

**Frank Walsh, Red Run GC, Royal Oak, Mich., says:**

"Our shop-to-shop exchange is working very well. I may take 25 shirts that have been on my counter for two weeks (and not

*(Continued on page 67)*



"Would you mind moving back, Ed — I can't keep my eyes on the ball."

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And while you're studying this way of moving merchandise, give attention to the possibility of too much of your display being in cases and on shelves that are hard to get to and virtually discourage the purchaser. Open table selling has been the biggest money-making display operation that's come into pro shops for years. The open display enables the merchandise to sell itself and the merchandise properly and conveniently displayed often can do a better job of high-pressure selling than the pro or his shop assistants ever would dare attempt.

### PROS EXCHANGE STOCKS

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moving) and send them to Uslac, Maguire, Belfore, Smith, Shannon, Rutan, Watrous or any other of the near-by pros and pick up 25 shirts he has, or exchange for balls, umbrellas, shoes—anything. He is welcome to do the same thing with me. We keep passing goods back and forth all season.

"If a man comes into my shop and we are out of what he wants, or he needs an odd size, we get on the phone, call the other boys and 9 times out of 10 we'll have what the man wants before he leaves Red Run.

"We haven't found the answer to getting big buying after mid-summer but always in

July and September I switch the shop around completely so when a member walks in he thinks he is in a brand new show-room. That pep's up buying.

"Our trade-in business is simple. We have 400 caddies on our list. They have fathers, brothers, uncles who are looking for good used clubs. This caddy sales force is very effective. Because of what caddies are earning now and their wide field of acquaintance there might well be some pro thought given to the sales promotion possibilities of the caddies.

"We also have a lot of office employees in Detroit looking for bargain values in used clubs.

"The shop-to-shop exchange has been great for us all in the Detroit district. It should be highly recommended to other districts as it gets the boys pulling together, selling together, exchanging goods and ideas in friendly and profitable relationship."

Jack Schneiderman, Mount Pleasant GC, Leicester, Mass., believes in closing-out merchandise that hasn't moved in the big-selling months of the season. Jack thinks the risk of changing models or styles warrants marking down any surplus or slow-moving stock and turning it into cash. His opinion is that the greater part of such merchandise is bought by people who other-

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wise wouldn't be sold and those who have bought early in the season have been satisfied by the months of use they got ahead of the late buyers.

Schneiderman also says he has no trade-in problem as all trade-ins are sold or GIVEN to his caddies. "There always is some kid or kids who can use a change in clubs and the pro can use the trade-ins to encourage the caddies," Jack adds.

### SPALDING TRU-FLITES IN NEW BOX

The new Tru-Flite golf ball box now being distributed by A. G. Spalding & Bros., Inc., with an action designed tip-up flap makes an eye-catching display for counter or shelf use.

### NEW GRIND OF PEAT FOR SPREADERS

Michigan Peat, Inc., 267 5th Ave., New York, announce a newly developed "fine grind" form of their Michigan peat, which permits its uniform flow through spreaders for top-dressing. Widely used for its moisture retention qualities in protecting turf through hot weather, the convenience and labor economy of the fine-grind form already has broadened the demand for Michigan peat in the golf course management field. Detailed information from the company's New York office.

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## Johnny's Youngest Pupils Get Started Right



The veteran John R. Inglis, pro at Fairview CC and perennial president of Metropolitan PGA is starting golfers as young as 4 years of age. These youngsters, Toni Ruth Manning and Skeeter Dunn are beginners with the Bristol Cadet set of a 29-in. driver and three irons. For older children there are the Bristol Sub-junior set of 35-in. driver and three irons and the Bristol Junior set with a 39-in. driver and four irons. Inglis says the little kids with their own clubs quickly get pretty fair swings, develop a keen interest in playing and learn golf etiquette right at the start.

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