

Make Most of Utility Features in Planning Pro Shop

By HUGH GORDON

Unprejudiced observers tell me that I have one of the finest pro shops in the Middle Atlantic area. Roanoke Country Club has a membership of over eight hundred. It has the only private golf course in the city, and it is a busy place.

This last season the Club put on a \$100,000 building program to keep up with the needs of its members. A new golf shop was one of the projects that got lost in the increase of actual costs beyond those estimated. A knotty pine grill room, a bright new steel kitchen, a maze of refrigerating units, a tricky ice cube machine, and expanded quarters for the manager flourished under gleaming new copper roofs. The old rat infested store room opening into the golf repair shop, a new door cut into the golf sales room, and three hundred dollars for lumber and paint were squeezed out of that one hundred thousand and allocated for golf needs.

When pros write proudly of their new twenty five thousand dollar golf shops, I boast with equal pride of my new (re-modelled) one constructed without benefit of Santa Claus. In planning a pro shop, a knowledge of the utility value of its features is better than grandiose dreams of fancy gadgets approved by Board members or architects who have never had to sell merchandise, regulate caddies, take in greens fees, run tournaments, and be a target for gripes all at one time through a fog of fatigue and sweat.

My shop works. The arrangements of golf goods catches the eye of prospective buyer, and are so convenient that the shop boys can give good service even though their total consciousness is absorbed in planning their evening's entertainment. And my shop is neat and clean, since paint is still a great cosmetic.

My pro shop is eighteen feet by twenty four. I had the door leading into it from the grill and the locker room moved to be exactly opposite the one facing the first tee. Registration of guests and supplies for sale are to the left as the golfer enters, the score board is to the right, racks for the three hundred or more handicap cards are on the far wall, and the door to the club storage and repair shop is to the far right. The player can dash through to the first tee without buying a thing, but since the

exit is so clear in front of him, he is more apt to pause and wonder if he is missing something. That technique is called taking-the - bait - out - of - the - pocket - and-looking - it - over - and - then - putting - it - back - in - the - pocket - again. It is a good sales approach. And remember, no one can easily get to the first tee without going through the run way of my shop.

I salvaged the old bar counter from the grill and helped a carpenter fit it with a right angle bend so that I have a good show space to display clubs, and a protected area in which the player can try them out without danger to the golfer who is buying balls or registering his guests, or rushing to his foresome at the first tee. The salvaging of this old counter may have occasioned a few cracks about going from high balls to golf balls or from Lipton's to Spalding's, but the counter lends itself as readily to the sale of one kind of ball or tee as another. And, incidentally, the bit of counter I could not use was begged for by a member who had it made into a private bar, painted it a stinging red, and regards it as the prize piece of furniture in his fine home. I have never asked how his wife feels about it.

A show case for small sundries is further along the left side of the shop, and in this far corner near the handicap card racks I keep a couple of chairs for the golfer who likes to sit down and talk over his game a while, rather than lean on the counter with the rest of the gang.

My club storage racks and repair shop is eighteen feet by thirty six. It has a second door to the outside through which the caddies can return clubs when this is feasible. My racks are made of wood, re-modeled from the old ones. They vary in size to accomodate variations in size and shape of all the new golf bags.

My shop walls and floor always look bright and fresh. I know, because I repaint them myself as they need it. Don't think for a minute that I am trying to say "A poor thing, but mine own." I have one of the finest pro shops to be found anywhere. Ask the golf sales men when they come your way, or ask my Club members. Ask anyone who has seen it, but don't ask Santa Claus. Our Club was too busy building a new roof to get a chimney ready for him.

