

# No Lull in Sales Planning of Successful Pros

There is no lull for the professional who's making a success of his business. When he isn't in the part of the season when buying demand is brisk he is figuring how he can do something that will lengthen the season, increase his sales volume and give his players sales service and satisfaction.

That's what has increased pro shop business many fold; looking for greater sales opportunities instead of waiting for customers to wander in when there is something they want quickly. The pro has to be an alert and resourceful merchant, always thinking and planning, because he often has to contend with adverse weather. Weather was spotty in sections this year. Rainy week ends delayed the start of the season in some areas. In other places there were rainy Saturdays, Sundays or holidays. Of if it isn't rain, drought with intensely hot weather, may reduce play as it did in several districts this year.

So the pro has to keep planning and plugging for sales all of the time. Even when his club is shut down he has to keep planning for next season, or, as an increasing number of professionals in all parts of the country have been doing the past few years, adding big Christmas gift business to the sales volume.

Prior to World War II not many pros gave much attention to the holiday sales prospects. Many pros in northern and central states went south or southwest right after their own seasons closed and the Christmas business went to the stores, frequently beating those pros out of sales they expected would wait until they got back on the job in the spring. But that's been changed considerably since the end of World War II. Now the majority of pros make lively and persistent campaigns for Christmas gift business, and in numerous instances the December volume is one of the biggest months for pros.

What successful pro businessmen have been doing in increasing sales and developing their market is told in some more statements from the GOLFDOM survey which investigated methods pros were using to make their selling season longer.

Additional comments from energetic pro business leaders follow:

**Emil Beck, Black River CC, Port Huron, Mich.,** says, "Many pros will find themselves stocked to the hilt especially

with sportswear unless they take advantage of stock reduction sales.

"An idea that has worked successfully is an exchange agreement between pro shops where there are two or more golf clubs in the area. It has been shown that a particular item will be popular at one club and will not move off the shelves at another just a few miles away and very often an exchange deal among the pros works wonders.

"Insofar as the return of golf clubs to a manufacturer is concerned, a pro who returns them is only hurting himself."

**George Getchell, Omaha (Nebr.) CC,** says, "Sales made in August, September and October and even later in the year, are made through the service that the pro gives his members in April, May, June and July. To keep the members buying in the pro shop, the pro must show him the benefits he has to offer.

"As for the trade-ins, I never sell them to a member. I dispose of them to caddies that provide a ready market."

**Jack Gormley, Wolferts Roost CC, Albany, N. Y.,** writes, "In August, Sept. and Oct. I try to sell discontinued model clubs and find that pro shop sales keep up a whole lot better when one can at least show this high-priced merchandise at a lower price even though they are discontinued models. It lets the customer know that they receive high-class clubs at prices that will save them money. They invariably wind up by purchasing a late model set at the higher price.

"When I have a clearance sale it is generally started in late October and I keep the same cut prices until Dec. 20. This results in better sales for the Christmas buying and helps tremendously in reducing inventory. I take plenty of trades and find a willing market in those golfers who want quality second-hand clubs in preference to inferior low-priced new clubs. Trade-in clubs that are too old or in poor condition I sell to the caddies for the same price as I allow on them. I take trade-in clubs all season long (not only in the fall) and I find that the swing weight scale, and the offer of a good allowance on old clubs, plus the chance of trying out in actual play any club new or old that I carry in my stock is the best way of selling clubs."

**W. C. (Bill) Gordon, Tam O'Shanter GC, Chicago, Ill.,** makes the statement,

"The 1951 selling season will have to be long as golf professionals as a whole are on the long side in golf merchandise." He continues, "Intense concentration on customers' needs will have to be exercised to the limit this year. More outside pro shop buying has been noticed at my club than heretofore, due to intimation that golf equipment would be scarce.

"I have found many dissatisfied owners of sets of clubs that have not produced good results ready buyers of clubs that fit them. The greatest method of selling golf equipment in September and October is to continue competitive events at the club as long as possible. Most clubs stop their events too soon.

"Sales for winter tourists is also a means of reducing summer's inventory. My own ingenuity, I know, will be stretched to the limit to bring about an acceptable inventory that will be saleable without a loss in 1952."

**Harold Sargent, East Lake CC, Atlanta, Ga.,** tells, "In starting a sale I have always operated on the theory that the first cut, or loss, is the smallest. Therefore I make the sale price a nice saving to my members. I also have found that the best time to have a sale is when they still are wearing the merchandise. Summer clothes I put on sale during the month of July and winter clothes start in Feb.

"During the end of the season before new models come along, I give a nice trade-in on some of the clubs that are very slow sellers. Of course I try to pick my customers who I think will be interested in a bargain.

"Second hand clubs we sell to our Juniors and some beginners. We tell our customers that it is better to have a good second-hand set than an inexpensive new set. We also have used Ads in the newspapers. We have a very large Junior class, 92 children, which helps to move the 'dead wood'."

**Tom Fry, Municipal GC, San Mateo, Calif.,** wrote in saying, "Sales during the months of August, September and October are quite normal; however, our slow months in the Bay Area are generally January and February when heavy rain slows play considerably.

"It is my theory that when a golf professional has clubs that he is unable to sell, he would be wise to offer a "long" trade-in on that particular brand rather than cut the price.

"Naturally, here at a public course we accept trade-ins and are able to sell all we have in used clubs. I tell my customers that for beginners, a good used set of clubs is better than a cheap new set.

"It is my opinion that some pros overbuy and that if the individuals would take

more time in estimating their needs and buying accordingly they might not be too over-stocked at the end of their season.

"In the past year I have purchased, from other local pros, certain items they were over-stocked on and too some of us who are located near each other sometimes supply articles to neighboring pros which they have a sale for and are temporarily out of.

"As you may know, the PGA has issued a "Blue-Book" suggesting trade-in allowances on clubs which we follow. We resell the used equipment at about a 20% profit."

**Tom Carney, Belmont Hills CC, St. Clairsville, Ohio,** says, "I've been able to meet this problem of late season clearance by reducing clubs and other equipment around 12% to 15%. One of my boys has had some experience with commercial printing, and he draws up posters pointing out the advantage to late season buying. We place these in the pro shop, locker-room and other strategic places. Along with this we check over the bags and make up a list of those with old sets and the relative condition of the club. We then sound out these people without high pressuring the customer but, between the posters, reduced prices and individualized sounding out, we've had pretty good success in clearing out our stock."

**Jack Sabol, Westchester Hills GC, White Plains, N. Y.,** uses the following two major methods to help dispose of excess merchandise in the latter part of the season.

"I allow a very liberal allowance on my members' old set of irons or woods. These used woods and irons are sold to the junior members, older caddie boys, local firemen and police and the clergy who are allowed free use of our golf course during week days. The clubs are sold on most occasions below the allowance I gave the member in order to dispose of them as rapidly as possible.

"I am very fortunate in being located in an area where there are a large number of golf courses within a 10 mile radius. I contact many of the pros at these clubs and let them know of the excess merchandise. In this way we can exchange or purchase from one another instead of ordering from the various concerns. This is being done also with golf balls as many of the boys are greatly overstocked on them.

"I like to stay clear of sales at reduced prices on 1951 merchandise but would rather give them a very liberal allowance on their old clubs instead and take a loss in re-selling the old clubs."