

OCTOBER • 1951

Golf Manufacturers, Dealers, Look Cautiously at 1952

Already 1952 is beginning with manufacturers of golf playing and course equipment. Shortages of materials and labor and government controls on some materials already in inventory will affect the course maintenance equipment considerably more than it will the playing equipment supply. Clubs, bags and balls, according to present indications, will be adequate for a normal year's play in 1952 but there won't be any surplus to disturb the market.

Maintenance equipment will be available but not to what might be considered a normal year's needs. It's plain that clubs requiring equipment and materials and supplies of some items can't take much of a chance in delaying ordering. Part of the difficulty in golf field ordering lies in the change of officers at clubs. A retiring administration may hesitate to order what's needed and by the time the incoming administration gets on the job shipping dates are subject to further delay.

An interesting phase of the playing equipment situation is the amount of Christmas ball business. It indicates that the stocks laid up around the time the Korean war started have been pretty nearly sold out.

Most reports indicate that play this year will be slightly ahead of 1950, despite adverse weather conditions in some sections and over-crowding at many courses, public as well as public and semi-public. Early fall play has increased at northern and central courses during the past few years.

Easing of government restrictions on course construction probably will result in a fair amount of public course construction in the near future, notwithstanding fairly high prices. The employment situation and successful promotion of junior golf create a demand for more golf facilities.

Private clubs, particularly, have found that higher costs and continued demand

for high standard of course maintenance and clubhouse operation are forcing dues increases. It is not believed that tax developments will have seriously adverse effect on private club memberships as most of these clubs in metropolitan districts have had heavy play and waiting lists.

Increase in women's play has been marked this year, with more rounds per woman player rather than a great increase in the number of women taking up golf this year, seems to be strongest factor in the year's lively activity in women's golf.

What the war situation may do to golf is anybody's guess but as there appears to be no chance of gasoline restrictions, which were the strongest factor in reducing golf play during wartime, it is expected that industrial activity with its recreation requirements will have golf play increasing normally in 1952.

Inability to push big suburban real estate developments in 1951 curtailed the trend of buying golf courses for subdividing.

How representative manufacturers in golf look at 1952 prospects is disclosed by the following statements:

A. G. SPALDING & BROS., Inc.; C. F. Robbins, pres.:

Reports that come to us from all over the country indicate that the interest and the actual playing of golf in the year 1951 has been on a high level. Nothing in any of these reports indicates any substantial lessening of either the interest or the active play for the year 1952. At this writing, therefore, it is our opinion that prospects for 1952 are for as large a participation as we had in 1951 and possibly even somewhat greater wherever the golf course facilities will permit.

There is much publicity these days about the availability of materials. The supply of all metals is limited; copper is by far the worst.

There is disagreement about the gov-

ernment's program for stockpiling rubber. This is really the determining factor with regard to availability of crude rubber for civilian activities.

Our over-all viewpoint of the situation may be summarized briefly as follows: We do not know that there are shortages, rather than surpluses, of the materials used in the manufacture of golf equipment. The armament program is definitely to proceed. As a consequence, we see no likelihood of the present shortages turning into surpluses. There is always the possibility that the shortages may become more pronounced.

Our conclusion, therefore, is that merchants, whether they be golf pros or not, would be well advised to carry merchandise stocks that are ample to take care of their normal requirements, based on the assumption that the participation in playing golf will remain on a high level in 1952.

HORTON-BRISTOL MFG. CO., Graham R. Treadway, pres.:

It seems almost impossible to foresee any clear pattern, insofar as availability, buying trends, or business generally is concerned. Golf equipment manufacturers will undoubtedly have their difficulties in pursuing a smooth production program but there seems to be no great need for scare buying at this time.

We would recommend that a golf professional, in planning for the 1952 season —

1. Take careful end-of-season inventory.
2. Compile his record of sales by item for 1951.
3. Discount unusual factors in his sales picture.
4. Prepare a budget based on his experience and good judgment.

These suggestions are so plain and elementary that they are difficult for anyone to adhere to, but we all, the professional included, should protect to the limit our credit and business position.

We seem to be living and planning on a day to day basis in this hectic world and by the time GOLFDOM goes to press, some other formula might be indicated!

WILSON SPORTING GOODS CO.; Fred J. Bowman, pres.:

The situation in golf equipment hasn't changed a great deal since we wrote on this same matter a year ago this time. The manufacturers still have a problem of material shortages, especially in metals. However, unless the war becomes much larger than it is today, we still feel there will be materials available for civilian products.

We certainly don't recommend that any golf professional over-extend himself financially and lay in large inventories in anticipation of shortages to come later in

the season. In general, our sentiments are about the same as last year. We are only sorry some professionals didn't follow our recommendations made at that time. Unfortunately, some professionals have their cash tied up in slow-moving merchandise.

Those professionals who followed a sane policy along these lines report a highly profitable year, in spite of adverse weather conditions in most localities. Their inventories are in good shape as the season draws to a close. We certainly recommend that any professionals who are still over-inventoried make concentrated effort to dispose of these inventories before the present season closes out.

No shortages in rubber and steel seem apparent. We know the policy of the government officials in Washington is that of no unnecessary prohibition of these materials, such as was applied during World War II. We firmly believe that the 1952 future for golf equipment is excellent, bearing in mind, of course, that an all-out shooting war would make many drastic changes in all types of business.

JACOBSEN MFG. CO., M. J. Walker, dir. of sales:

According to all present indications, the actual CMP release of material will be less than has been anticipated or predicted by press releases from NBA. The latest information in the case of material will be approximately 65% and is determined by using base figures which amount to the first six months of 1950, rather than the season just passed. In other words, it is almost a certainty that the available equipment for sale to golf courses for the coming season will be 35% less, at least, than last year.

The prices will probably be about the same as are in effect at this time. Delivery will be difficult as the materials can only be obtained by quarters which makes a production rather difficult.

Certain models will be produced in certain quarters in order to obtain a production volume of that particular product, since it appears that our total anticipated production for the coming season will be ordered by our franchise dealers before December 15. They, in turn, are of course basing their orders on the specifications of their respective customers and will be able to furnish only the amount of equipment which can be ordered in advance for later delivery.

We are finding that most golf course customers are anticipating their requirements now and are placing their orders with their favorite supplier of those products.

We are going to do everything possible to produce as much material in accordance with the government regulations as



PLAY BOUGHT THIS TOWN

American Playground Device Co., Anderson, Ind., makers of outdoor playground and swimming pool equipment widely used by country clubs, bought the town of Nahma, Mich., including more than 100 homes, factory buildings, hotel, golf course and office building, and miles of sandy beach fronting Big Bay de Noc and Sturgeon river frontage among the 4300 acres. Property was acquired from the Bay de Noquet Lumber Co. Warren and Norm Miller, who made the American Playground Device Co. big business with play promotion, smart selling and great teamwork with and from their employees, are going to operate in the new town where they expect to make it a model home, manufacturing and recreation community, and keep their plant at Anderson going at full speed, too.

possible and maintain good service delivery for the equipment now in use.

HILLERICH & BRADSBY CO.; Wm. Kaiser, pro golf sales mgr.:

We are confident that 1952 will be a very fine golf year especially since we had such a fine season in 1951, although many persons in a position to know thought that golf would be curtailed to some extent.

In view of this, even though more rigid restrictions have been placed on the manufacturers due to the mobilization program, such as the cuts on such vital materials as brass, aluminum, and steel, and the quota which specifies the number of clubs that can be produced each month, we believe there will be an adequate supply of merchandise available and that golf will continue to boom in 1952.

We feel that the majority of the manufacturers will not make any radical changes in their lines other than improvements on models and construction, as the people from whom the golf industry ob-

tains raw materials did not make any changes, but I am confident that our 1952 line will be the finest we have ever offered.

In my travels from one part of the country to another in 1951 I found more interest in golf than ever before, and the same old story prevails — that if facilities were available, the number of people participating in the game would grow by leaps and bounds.

STUMPP & WALTER CO.; Alex E. Sehlmeier, vp:

At the present time, a further curtailment in the use of steel, aluminum, and other essential materials requested by the Office of Defense Mobilization, should create additional problems in supplying golf courses with maintenance needs.

There may be some items that will be difficult to obtain and we have had that experience all this year, particularly on small motors and aluminum. There probably will be a limited amount of every-

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GOLF MANUFACTURERS

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thing and therefore, the clubs should anticipate their requirements as far in advance as possible and not wait until the last minute to order.

There are shortages at the present time in some of the fertilizers as well as insecticides, but this still does not present any great problem.

Seed crops have been disappointing, particularly the varieites used by golf courses, such as Chewing's fescue, Illahee creeping fescue, and the various bent grasses. No doubt there will be sufficient seeds to go around, but prices will be no lower than they have been and perhaps somewhat higher.

Golf course play will no doubt continue to be heavy and with so few new courses being constructed today, clubs generally should have a full membership. It surely looks as if 1952 will be a good year for golf courses, but there will be problems in getting materials as the defense program continues.

GOLFCRAFT, Inc.; Ted Woolley, pres.:

Steady promotion of golf has the golf market in sound condition for 1952 with the prospects of employment at high wages offsetting inflation in effect on probable amount of golf play.

Inventories of clubs have been brought down in 1951 to figures that give assurance of a normal condition next year. Materials for club-making are increasingly difficult to secure and as the Controlled Materials Plan now is in operation it is plain that there will be no possibility of allowing manufacturing schedules to run ahead of fairly conservative estimates of 1952 sales.

Leading manufactures of golf clubs are located in areas where competition for labor is getting stiffer every day. This also is going to be a major factor in club production and indicates that early ordering of well-balanced stock will be wise policy for professionals.

Manufacturers have been struggling with sharply rising costs so prices of fine quality clubs won't get so high the market will be sharply restricted. The problem of keeping prices at a level that will fit in with the effective promotion of golf in the younger age brackets and among office and factory workers has been somewhat eased by the excellent job professionals have been doing in handling the trade-in deals.

The experience of professionals with the ball shortage scare that came about the time of the beginning of the Korean war has been a good reminder to keep inventories under conservative business control rather than on a speculative basis. Our

firm opinion is that the golf market will be in stable, lively condition next year, due to increasing general recognition of the appeal of the game, the professionals' status as sound businessmen, and the club manufacturers' watchfulness in helping to keep the professionals in a position to make a steady profit and protect the market against costly fluctuations.

GEORGE A. DAVIS, Inc.; C. O. Borgmeier:

The effect of the government's increased military program is being felt in all metal goods lines as they effect golf course maintenance equipment and materials.

Mowing equipment manufacturing is being progressively curtailed from one quarter to the next, and at the present time there will be little more than 50% available for 1952 than was available in 1951. Other maintenance equipment is more or less in the same situation. Some manufacturers who have made turf items from time to time have gone into military production, and hence some items will be missing entirely. Chemicals, insecticides and fungicides so far are available though higher in price.

Grass seed, such as fescues and bents, are short in supply and high in price. Kentucky blue grass and red top are more plentiful and somewhat less in price than in 1951.

There is some reason to think that golf clubs, parks, cemeteries and other institutions have used foresight and covered their needs in machinery to a large extent during the latter part of 1950 and 1951. Thus curtailed production for 1952 may not be as calamitous as superficial figures indicate. Under present circumstances it is wise and necessary to plan almost a year in advance. Based on present observation, it will hardly be possible that the turf maintenance equipment needs for 1952 will be met satisfactorily by manufacturers and distributors of such merchandise.

UNITED STATES RUBBER CO.; G. T. McCarthy, Mgr., golf ball sales: As we look forward to the 1952 golf season, conditions are similar to those that prevailed a year ago when we were asked how the prospects looked for the 1951 golf season. The Korean War goes on, and the country is still in the midst of an all-out production drive for national defense. With a year's experience in world turmoil, which caused shortages of material here and there, the golf professional has become a better businessman, and with the use of the knowledge obtained the pro will make 1952 another outstanding year in golf. It is amazing how interest in golf continues to grow, and if it were not for the huge defense program,

it is safe to say the construction of many new golf courses would have started throughout the land in order to meet the ever increasing popularity of the game. All indications point to an even bigger and better year for golf in 1952.

Some pros are carrying inventories, which are greater than they carried during normal times, and our advice to these pros is that they become more sales promotion minded and make every effort to move the material off their shelves into the hands of their members. Such booklets as "More Sales for the Golf Professional", published by the National Golf Foundation and the Professional Golfers' Association of America, should be studied, and the many suggestions given in that booklet to aid the pro in moving stock should be put into effect.

MACGREGOR GOLF CO.; Henry P. Cowen, pres.: Projecting the future of forecasting a trend is always a dangerous occupation, particularly when conditions are as equally uncertain as they were at this corresponding period last year. Nevertheless, despite all the complications of the past 12 months, previous predictions actually held true of an adequate supply of golf equipment for the 1951 season. The prospect now, for at least the first six months of 1952, is that there will be enough of most merchandise to go around, even with cutbacks now started in output of civilian goods that use metal, such as golf equipment.

The Controlled Materials Plan was extended to all civilian-goods manufacturers on October 1st, including the production of all sports equipment that use basic metals. This means that the three controlled metals—steel, copper, aluminum—will be distributed by permits on government allocation as in World War II. While this indicates an assured supply for our industry, it will also involve quite probably a somewhat reduced supply, but on the basis of this program there is little reason to provoke the hectic, stampede variety of buying which characterized the buying spree during the last six months of 1950.

Golf production, therefore, undoubtedly will be maintained at adequate, though possibly reduced levels. Our sales representatives have been out about six weeks, as this is written, and from stock orders already booked for next Spring delivery, a trend is already recognizable of a return to more normal buying practices. Buying, in other words, is on the basis of need, not on the basis of fear.

It's true that the situation remains clouded with uncertainty but it is recommended to professionals that at all times they should have a complete and current record of their inventory, know

what they have in stock, and their future needs be carefully estimated and analyzed with equal attention before continuing to buy and perhaps find themselves overstocked far beyond their sales potential. As interested as we are in selling, we want to particularly caution against the temptation to overbuy, for a man's financial position and his credit standing can not be jeopardized without serious consequences. Putting it another way, don't go overboard. We're not faced with a crisis by any means. Merchandise should be stocked only in such quantities as can be efficiently carried consistent with proper turnover during the season.

DUNLOP TIRE & RUBBER CORP., Vincent Richards, Asst. to Pres.:

Golf play this year apparently showed some increase despite some bad weather and lack of facilities. Under circumstances that will require attention to physical and mental condition, the golf play in 1952 should continue to be at a high figure. I am of the opinion there will be enough balls and clubs to supply players' normal needs next year.

G. B. LEWIS COMPANY; Steven C. Parks, Gen. Sales Mgr.:

In checking purchasing and inventory records I find we are in an excellent position to supply the trade during 1952. Commitments to us on raw materials exceed 1951 sales so we should be in excellent shape to promptly handle all orders.

WEST POINT LAWN PRODUCTS; Tom Mascaro:

In determining what the situation will be in regard to manufacture of golf course equipment in 1952, we can only speak from our own experience and not generally. It is almost a certainty that we will receive less material for the manufacture of our products than we have in 1951.

During the present year, we were able to secure almost all the raw materials we required but were frequently handicapped by shortages of prefabricated parts over which we had no control. At no time were we forced to delay shipments.

If the material situation does not decline we will be able to maintain normal production through the first quarter of 1952. If our materials allotment is cut further, we will find it difficult to meet regular production standards.

In 1951, although our costs increased, we were able to reduce prices on one model we produce and also offered superior models for the same price in other lines. At the present time, we have no plans for increasing prices but, with scheduled increases in the price of many of our prefabricated parts, we may not be able to continue this policy past the first quarter of 1952.

I believe, however, that people buying

our equipment will be able to obtain immediate delivery on all items and, at present prices, through the first and second quarter of 1952.

AMERICAN LIQUID FERTILIZER CO., INC.; E. Whitaker:

At the present time it looks as if we will have adequate supplies to take care of Liqua-Vita for 1952. The supply situation, however, on raw materials will be governed by the world situation. If the war is not settled and spreads, allotments will undoubtedly be cut down by the Government.

HENRY HOTZE & SONS COMPANY; Bent Hotze, pres.:

In common with manufacturers, jobbers and retailers, a great number of golf professionals open their 1951 season with an oversize inventory, particularly of golf balls. Spring play, along with sales, was retarded by poor weather in the East and Middle West. In a number of cases this condition was reflected in extended payments of account. At this time, however, our salesmen report inventories approaching normal and accounts in satisfactory condition.

After such trying experiences as this 1951 season we expect to see inventories and Spring purchases at a reasonable level, based on sound previous experience. We find the demand for high quality tested golf equipment handled by the golf professional continuing to increase despite current comparatively high price levels which have become established in the past season. We see no prospect of reduction, but hope rather for stability.

STANDARD MANUFACTURING CO.; Walt Voorhees, Gen. Mgr.:

We do not contemplate much change in our prices. So far we have been fortunate in being able to largely offset increased labor and material cost by improved manufacturing equipment and methods and a substantial increase in our volume of production.

The quantity of equipment available is, of course, directly dependent on the allotment of materials by the N.P.A. At the present time, indications are that material allotments may be cut as much as 50% from last year's consumption. This will affect practically all of our products except wood flag poles.

So far there has been no restriction on wood products, but it is difficult to obtain the proper quality of hard woods for flag poles. However, we buy this material about a year ahead of our actual needs and have a normal stock on hand at this time.

It is our advice that golf equipment buyers anticipate their requirements and place orders with their equipment dealers

so they in turn may know better what they will need and be able to supply the equipment when it is required.

WALTER HAGEN GOLF DIVISION; E. P. Rankin, Gen. Mgr.:

This golf game is growing so rapidly that it is taxing the ability of our private courses and public links to take care of the play. Wherever I have inquired this year, I have been advised that play is heavier than it ever was in 1951 and that the number of beginners was tremendously increased. Private clubs to a very great extent have full memberships and in some cases, waiting lists.

In view of this condition, I believe 1952 may be even a better year than 1951 where pro shop business is concerned.

From a material standpoint it is my feeling that we should be able to produce a sizeable volume of golf clubs, unless world conditions become worse than they are. Whether the quantity we can produce will be equal to sales of course is a matter than only time will tell. All in all, I feel that 1952 holds great things for the Hagen Division and for the pro shops of America as well.

THE SKINNER IRRIGATION CO.; A. R. Friedmann:

I am afraid that the consensus of the course maintenance and material situation will be rather gloomy. We are all being curtailed and limited by a drastic reduction in raw material metals. In our case, brass is of primary importance. We were cut 60% on our brass use during the summer months and our fourth quarter allocation of brass is even less than the 60%.

I am sure that our position is no different than any other manufacturer of sprinkler equipment. We will have only a limited amount of irrigation equipment to sell next year—not nearly enough to meet the demand.

MOCK SEED CO.; Allen F. Mock:

Fescues and Bents are decidedly in short supply, and the price is higher. Kentucky Bluegrass is in better supply, but still smaller than in the past year. Undoubtedly the shortage of Fescues will cause a greater use of Bluegrass. There will be sufficient seed for use in the Spring of 1952, although prices on the short items will be higher. It appears, however, that Fescues will be very hard to secure for Fall sowing in 1952.

WORTHINGTON MOWER CO.; H. J. Pine, Jr., Sales Mgr.:

The status of our equipment from a manufacturing standpoint at the writing of this letter reveals that there should be enough to go around, that is providing there is no hoarding of equipment and that there is no change in the defense

situation as it stands now. If there should be any increased demands for defense, all bets are off and equipment could become scarce.

As far as delivery is concerned, we recommend that equipment be taken when available. Controlled material planning limits production to a percentage of the base period. Therefore, manufacturers must arrange schedules to get the most production from legal available suppliers in each base period. Any materials not used in one of these base periods is lost and cannot be carried over and added to the next period.

The only thing definite about prices for next year is that they will certainly not be lowered. The possibility of higher prices is becoming more evident due to allowances of increase in labor, transportation, and other items. These increases as they are allowed will certainly affect our price situation for the coming year.

KENNETH SMITH:

Barring outright war or any other unpredictable calamity, I would say we are headed for another very good year if the pros are on their toes to do a good job of selling. This means having a proper display and a thorough understanding of the products they are selling.

TORO MFG. CO., Robert W. Gibson, vp in charge of sales:

Curtalement of materials and acute shortage of labor means that there simply won't be enough golf course mowers to care for the demand in 1952. Reduction of possible output already is approximately 30% and although conditions might improve there are at present no indications of more output of course mowing equipment, especially with emphasis on speeding up war materiel production.

Maintenance equipment that will become available under reduced manufacturing schedules will go to those who act quickly.

WORTHINGTON BALL CO., J. C. Brydon, VP:

Notwithstanding unsettled material and labor prospects it appears that golf ball business in 1952 should be more stable than during the previous two years. This is, of course, considering the lesson of moderation in buying has been learned and there is no stampede toward hoarding. The professionals have a sound idea of ball requirements to assure continuance of play at a good normal rate. There is no logic or job security in golf ball speculation, and no prospect of any shortage that might make such speculation profitable.

There has been a very definite tendency toward high quality buying of balls by golfers although a big factor in play is the traffic on public and semi-public courses.

Turf Meetings Save Club Money with New Ideas

By **GEORGE L. LAMPHEAR**

Supt., **Riviera Country Club, Los Angeles**

Up to the time of World War II I believe the greatest advantage gained from our local organization of golf course supts. was the contact and exchange of experience between the veteran supts. and the younger men in the field. The experienced men, time and time again, have given the newer members information that was obtained after years of work with the problems of course maintenance; little tips that may seem small but yet distinguish great greenkeepers from unsuccessful ones.

Since the war we've had such rapid developments in fungicides, herbicides and other chemical materials that if one is not a member of an organization of course supts. his course probably would be maintained at the standard of the horse-and-buggy days.

Recently a representative from the UCLA turf experimental gardens gave us facts on crabgrass control that I am planning to use next year. Thru experiments he determined control for both crabgrass and fungus diseases that plague us in this section. If I can control both these troubles I'll save my club plenty of money. Short cuts such as this are among the benefits the clubs get from our monthly meetings.

Southern California Turf Conference, Nov. 14

Southern California Conference on Turf Culture will be presented by the College of Agriculture on November 14.

The conference will make the results of the College's experimental program in turf culture available.

Opening sessions will be held at the Ornamental Horticulture Area, 300 Veran Avenue, the western boundary of the University campus. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. and one hour later the first session will convene with Dr. V. T. Stoutemyer presiding. A registration fee of \$1 per each day will be charged. A buffet luncheon is scheduled for 12:15 p.m. at Rancho GC clubhouse, 10460 West Pico Blvd., Los Angeles. The conference will close with a dinner at Rancho at 6:30 when Verne Wickham, Parks Manager, Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, will talk on "Turf Culture Abroad" and Thomas Mascaro of West Point, Pa., will speak on "Turf Culture in U.S.A."

Programs for the conference, and registration blanks, are available by addressing University of California Extension, Department of Conferences, Los Angeles.