

Small Shop with Big Sales

From Close-up Displays

The shop at the Bob O'Link GC, at Highland Park, Ill., probably does as much business per member as any other pro shop in the world, although the shop is small—much smaller than many an old shop at average smaller town clubs. The reason is, first, Bob O'Link's membership. It's men-only. The club's 250 members are very active golfers and do considerable entertaining; in fact one of the problems at the club is that of keeping guest play restricted without curtailing the members' notably hospitable operations. The membership consists of 225 resident and 25 non-resident men, with the non-residents getting into the Chicago district often.

Previously the Bob O'Link shop was in a room out of the way of traffic to the first tee and from the 18th green. The location of the shop shut it out from big business, although Earl Dean, gen. mgr. of the club, and Stanley Pankman, teaching pro, made up for some of the defect of shop location by locker-room and tee selling.

Dean, who came with Bob O'Link as pro 28 years ago and who has performed so capably for the club that he now is responsible for all operations, naturally didn't regard the former shop as providing the service to which members were entitled. He kept trying to figure out ways of improvement without having to do a major construction job on the clubhouse.

Dean's concern about this matter was shared by Maynard G. (Scotty) Fessenden when he became Bob O'Link's president. Fessenden, as chmn. of the PGA Advisory committee, a member of six golf clubs and one of the strongest boosters for home club and tournament pros, always seemed to regard the old Bob O'Link shop as a reflection upon himself because he gets around a lot at golf clubs and has seen the great progress in pro shops.

Dean and Fessenden got the board to approve a \$10,000 expense for pro shop remodeling. Walls were knocked out and the main change made was setting the shop and its display so players walking from the locker-room were bound to bump into something attractive to buy.

The shop was trimmed with wood of a light greenish blue, a shade that made

the merchandise show up well. Indirect fluorescent lighting was installed. The flooring is twisted carpet which wears very well under spike traffic.

The ball and accessory counter is at the end of the shop opposite the door. Dean figured that inasmuch as balls were a staple item having the balls sold at a point that would require five or six steps to the right, away from the door, would expose the players to more display of merchandise.

All display is open. The apparel and shoes are on slanted shelves and almost pop out to invite inspection. The clubs, bags, umbrellas, etc., also are pushed at the possible buyers by the displays and the more the stuff is handled the better it suits Dean. The shop boys, the Schramm brothers, keep the place immaculate and have the excellent habit of putting every bit of merchandise neatly back into place after some buyer happens to get the stock disordered.

Change Stock Often

The first thing every morning the displayed merchandise and the rest of the shop is cleaned so it shines. The merchandise on display is changed often. Dean says that this practice of frequently changing the display reminds members that what they happen to see at the moment on display isn't, by any means, all of the shop stock. They have been educated to the fact that what they happened to see yesterday, or last week, on display isn't out of stock but probably is back in reserve storage and can be quickly brought out for sale.

There's a lot of storage space back of the shop. By getting word of big reserve stocks around to the members Dean and Pankman have the members realizing that they can be exactly suited with anything they may happen to want, even though what they happen to see on display at the time, doesn't exactly suit them.

Dean says that the small size of the shop made a virtue out of a necessity. There isn't so much on display that the customer is bewildered. But the main thing about the small shop is bringing the customers so close to the merchandise they feel that all they have to do to own it is to reach out and get it. The wall of the shop opposite that illustrated, has

Bob O' Link members walk out of locker room right into something to buy. Display is easy to reach. To the right: (L to R) Stanley Pankman, teaching pro; Tom Schramm, shop asst.; and Earl Dean, gen. mgr., Bob O' Link GC.



similar display flanking the locker-room door.

Dean and Fessenden maintain that the profitable discovery made in fitting the shop into small space was that traffic can be directed so it comes smack up against the merchandise and with that done selling is speeded. Too much pro shop display, they believe, is actually out of the way of possible customers.

One incident of how having traffic bump into display is an almost historic case of pro shop buying. A wealthy member had seven guests one day, some of whom walked into the pro shop while the others were getting dressed in the locker-room adjoining. The pro shop visitors were favorably commenting on the clubs that obviously were displayed to invite handling. The host observed the interest of these guests and the result was that he made gifts of seven bags, seven sets of irons and seven sets of woods.

Right after the new shop was installed Fessenden as a president eager to have his judgment confirmed, and being a guy of cheery and vigorous fluency of expression, spoke freely to some of his constituents, informing them that the ancient equipment with which they were playing made the new pro shop look bad, so if they didn't buy new stuff he would buy it, sign their names and shove it into the bags . . . or otherwise dispose of it so it would be their personal property. The buying boom in the new shop was started and it's never let down.

Promotion of Golf's Appeal Is Building Market

By JACK JOLLY
Jack Jolly & Sons, Inc.

Congratulations to GOLFDOM on completing its 25th year. The first 25 years are the hardest, as the records of extinct golf magazines show. With GOLFDOM having survived and grown and strengthened in its work of helping to build the business back of the game I hope it will, like Tennyson's brook, go on forever.

There can be no doubt of the continued growth of the game as its appeal and merit are so basically sound that the market is certain to steadily increase although marketing conditions, affected by general business factors, may present temporary problems testing the judgment and fitness to survive of those in the business of golf.

The fundamental value of the game as a physical and mental conditioner for players within a wide range of age, and for those whose recreation is limited by physical handicaps, give golf the liveliest marketing opportunities of any game. The market promotion begun by the enthusiasm of the amateur and professional pioneers of golf in the United States now has developed into market expansion work that has bright promise of happiness and health for millions who are not yet playing and a vastly enlarged market for those in golf business.

Club Managers Association Is 25 Years Old

GOLFDOM'S first issue, February, 1927, carried a piece on the first convention of the recently organized Club Managers Association of America. The association, organized mainly through the efforts of the late Col. C. G. Holden, then gen. mgr., of Olympia Fields CC (Chicago dist.), elected Holden its first president in a session held at Hotel Sherman, Chicago.

Frank H. Murray, then of Ravistoe CC (Chicago dist.) was elected sec., and Wm. Bohnhoff, then of Bryn Mawr (Chicago dist.) was elected treas. Vice presidents elected were J. W. Palise, T. J. Jones, H. J. Foerster, C. L. White-man and F. L. Woods.

The organization has grown tremendously in service and influence and now includes as members, managers of the great majority of country and city clubs. It has 34 section chapters and is giving especially valuable help to clubs now with its activities in club finances, operating

surveys and its legislative work.

Wm. B. Bangs, Jr., of a family famed in club management, is pres. of the CMAA. He left the Exmoor CC (Chicago dist.) several years ago to become mgr. of the University Club of Chicago. At present he is recuperating from the effects of overwork. His CMAA duties are being handled by the association vp, Page Curran, mgr., River Crest CC, Ft. Worth, Tex.

The Club Managers Assn. will have its 25th anniversary convention at Edgewater Beach hotel, Chicago, Feb. 10-13, 1952. Convention chmn. is H. W. Womeldorf, mgr., Medinah (Ill.) CC. Asst. convention chmn. is Jack Fina, Elmhurst (Ill.) CC. Convention sec. is Wm. A. Buescher, Knollwood CC (Chicago dist.) and convention treas. is Jack Febel, mgr., Bryn Mawr CC (Chicago dist.). Chmn. of the Educational conference is Wayne Miller, recently signed as mgr. by the Northmoor CC (Chicago dist.).