

# Pro Department Tunes In Profits for Resort

By HERB GRAFFIS

Six years ago after Fred Waring and his business staff had sifted Harry Obitz as the leading candidate for the pro job at the Shawnee CC the financial end of the deal came up for discussion. The Waring management named a figure that was thought to be in line with pro arrangements on a resort job.

Obitz said no. "The kind of a job you want done, and need done calls for a lot more money," Harry added. Waring believes in doing things right. He's made a fortune with his Pennsylvanians by having the right direction, the right personnel, the right music and the right staging. When Fred acquired the historic Buckwood Inn and golf course at Shawnee-on-Delaware, Pa., he was determined to do the right thing in reviving the delightful golfing atmosphere and conditions that Shawnee had when it was the property of the late C. C. Worthington and his sons.

Then Shawnee tournaments were world-famed as events that drew sparkling pro

and amateur talent and enthusiastic galleries on golfing holidays. Much of the PGA organization inspiration and encouragement came from the ardent amateur golfers who came from Philadelphia, New York City and points much further away to enjoy golf where the game was at its most pleasant intensity.

Restoring that mood and fitting it into different times and conditions was a challenge to Waring and his canny business organization. It was a job that needed unusual promotion work. Obitz got the deal because he wouldn't agree to going along in the customary manner. At that time Harry needed a job but he took a chance of losing out by asserting that the job wasn't one that could be handled as just another resort job. Waring and Obitz got together on a pro operation and promotion deal that meant quick and profitable action for all concerned.

The tournament schedule at Shawnee includes the Waite Memorial invitation for star amateurs, the Philadelphia Dis-



The golf professional staff of Fred Waring's Shawnee CC makes a business of being well groomed at all times. Harry Obitz (L), head man of the staff, finds this fastidious effort directly effective in registering more apparel sales. With Obitz (L to R) are assts. Jack Ryan, Dick Farley, Frank Minch, John Bove, Milt Ross and Rocco Cocco.

trict PGA, the Shawnee Invitation, the National Old Masters', pro-women and pro-member championships, a Golf Week and events every week-end during the season. An important part of the Obitz staff's duties is to get adults and the juniors who come with their parents engaged in frequent, friendly competitions as the matches not only bring together congenial people who form lasting friendships (and the habit of returning to Shawnee) but gets them all interested in improving their games.

The lesson business is a major promotion and sales angle with the Obitz staff. With Harry are: Jack Ryan, John Bove, Milt Ross, Frank Minch, Dick Farley and Rocky Coco. Stan Dudas of the Obitz corps recently went into the Army. The usual individual and class lesson procedure is only part of the teaching program. What makes the Shawnee teaching something all the guests talk about is the Sunday afternoon clinic.

#### Clinic Makes Business

By staging the clinic Sunday afternoons the guests at the Shawnee Inn stay over Sunday night and leave, mostly for New York or Philadelphia, early Monday. To warrant this extra charge at Shawnee the clinic has to be so good the guests are highly pleased that they stayed.

The clinic is conducted by Obitz and all

his teachers working the first part in unison, demonstrating shot-making details with the close harmony of a Waring musical number. After this demonstration "by the count", deliberate hooks and slices are played with explanations of their causes.

Then the viewers are brought into the show. Obitz maintains that the demonstrations and instruction generally put on by pro groups are not properly clinics in the way the medical profession conducts a clinic. The dictionary definition of clinic is "Instruction of a class by treatment of patients in the presence of the pupils." Clinical is defined as "Occupied with investigation of disease in the living subject by observation, as distinguished from controlled experiment."

Commonly the so-called golf clinics are merely demonstrations by pros who are the "healthiest" golfers and the "sick" golfer looking at them doesn't get the cure he expects from expert treatment.

#### Giving The Treatment

The Obitz staff takes the patients, tees up balls and has the patients take the treatment with 5-irons. The cure works so often that the ailing golfers who stay over for the clinic go away feeling much better. It isn't treatment that will make an entirely "well" golfer but Harry main-

*(Continued on page 55)*



The Shawnee professional staff keeps an eye on the future by starting the members of tomorrow off right at an early age. Lessons and play are a regular feature of the services offered by Obitz and his boys.

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short courses we get the answers to our problems if there are answers, and if there are not, we work together to find them."

Lawrence Huber, supt., Ohio State University GC, Columbus, says it is hard to point out any one thing learned from attending Turf Conferences and association meetings. Such an undertaking would require the listing of a great many facts, short cuts, new methods, etc. He says, in listing some of them in the order of importance, "I would say that 2,4-D has brought about the most important change made in the last five or six years on courses over the country. With the fungus and pest control we have today courses have shown vast improvement over past years.

"Aerifying in the last few years has proven its worth in getting the water to penetrate deeper into our clay soils and in letting the fertilizer down around the roots, all of which has resulted in better turf.

"These are a few of the outstanding things which come to mind at the moment; but let me add that a great deal is learned today from reading the fine golf and turf magazines that are published."

R. C. Bowman, supt., Lakewood CC, Dallas, Texas, says one of the great tips

he got at the annual turf conference last year and the thing that brought the most praise from members was how to handle nap on greens. At the proper time nap was taken off the greens and when the new grass came back he had the best putting surface ever.

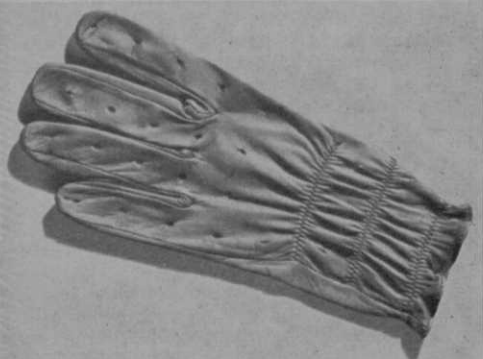
### PRO DEPT. TUNES IN

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tains that many of a golfing resort's patrons are people who are greatly benefited by a few tips—just enough, and simple enough, to be easily and deeply absorbed. Naturally much of this work has to be what a doctor might call emergency treatment as it's a sure thing a brief golf clinical session isn't going to remake a man's or woman's game.

Obitz maintains that considerable of this clinic treatment has resulted in a lot of less money for pros at points from which the Shawnee guests hail. Many of the clinic patients haven't taken golf instruction for years—or at all—because they had no idea pro instruction could be so helpful.

Harry says that he and his staff in numerous cases follow the medical general practitioner's line and refer the pa-



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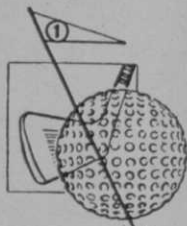
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tient to a home club pro as a "specialist;" meaning that the home club pro could do a lot of good for the patient if the patient would give the pro the time.

### Expose Guests to Buying

The lessons, the competitive programs and the lively golf atmosphere of the whole place develop a very substantial volume of shop business. Obitz is strongly adverse to any idea of high-pressure selling but he certainly makes it easy and pleasant for the Shawnee guests to be exposed to the temptation of buying.

He has volunteered in his shop a surprisingly large amount of business that has been entirely overlooked by pros at clubs from which Shawnee guests come. Pros could get some excellent instruction in alluring display and technique in exposing the merchandise to the customer when the customer is in the right mood, by observing the Obitz staff's methods.

The pro department personnel at Shawnee must be immaculately groomed and wearing the latest of what the shop has to sell. They're walking displays of shop merchandise. On hot days the teaching pros change outfits at noon. Fred and Harry both make a strong point of the pro staff at a smart resort showing par for smart resort wear.

### "Mind If I Change Shoes?"

Shoe business is particularly good and one reason is that when the circumstances permit a pro staff member will say to a guest "do you mind stepping into the shop for a few seconds while I change into my golf shoes?" The guest goes in, sits down by the shoe display, and guess what happens frequently?

The keynote of the Obitz operations are that Harry works on the platform that the pro shop and the services of the pro department personnel must be a golf resort attraction to personalize and emphasize the quality of the course and every other feature of the resort.

"We strive to attend to every guest so he and she will think subconsciously that the main reason Fred Waring runs Shawnee is to make each guest his happy friend. When that's done in a resort, private or fee club for the management the pro and the management both are going to be rewarded when they look at the financial statement."

### THE ROUGH AS A FACTOR

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and blend effectively with the natural landscape.

When properly proven by play, the outlines of the fairway (or rough) should be meticulously maintained. So often, careless or thoughtless mowing will gradu-