



Here's How A Young Pro Progresses in Business

By **WALTER J. BIBER**

Professional, Kalamazoo (Mich.) Country Club

Walter E. Biber, professional at Kalamazoo (Mich.) CC is one of those able and eager young pros about whom the club officials and members brag.

You can see from the accompanying illustrations of his shop, one of which shows Biber with a club, how he sets up for business so his members will be conveniently, completely and cheerfully given expert service in attractive surroundings.

Other young professionals moving up—and a lot of the older fellows too—will get something out of what Walter has to say about his job.

Here it is:

"A successful professional today has a job he must handle in a big business way. He must be an effective teacher, a good player, organizer, merchant, good-will ambassador, reception committee and have all the answers to golf. Is there any wonder that the PGA insists that an applicant must have at least five years' experience before he can become qualified as a home club pro member of the association?"

"I don't pretend to have all the an-

swers to this exacting and varied job, but there are quite a few things I've learned from those master pros for whom I've worked, from others among my fellow pros, from experience and all the reading and study I do to better equip myself to serve our club members.

"My season really begins in February when I start planning my season's program, such as changes in my pro shop, the caddie program, etc. I rearrange, paint and build new features of the pro shop early in the year so I won't be overly rushed on this work when I should be devoting all my time to my members.

"April 1, I always send my members a letter telling them of the opening of my shop and that I am looking forward to seeing them and serving them—as I most certainly am. I tell them what's new in my pro shop stock.

"Our club has a monthly bulletin in which I have a column. In it I continuously tell about new merchandise in the shop as that is information the member of a first class club expects from his pro.

"I also advertise by having folders sup-



plied by manufacturers sent out with the club's monthly statements and I've found this an excellent form of advertising.

"At the end of the season I send the members a letter thanking them for everything and telling them that their clubs have been re-conditioned and are ready to be picked up. Also in this letter I suggest golf gifts for Christmas and tell them that I'll make deliveries for them.

Pro-Member Relationship

"To me pro-member relationship is the most important part of a pro's job. If a pro is well-liked and regards his members as the finest bunch of men and women he's ever seen, then the rest of the job will run smoothly. When you really think the members are great you're always on the ball and interested in every one of the members getting the best of everything, and not concentrating on a select few. The members can sense that you are on the level and eager to help them and they'll go out of their way to buy everything they can from you.

"I treat every member with a great deal of respect and when they come into the shop I greet them in a way that shows I'm glad to see them. This is easy, because I really am glad.

"I make sure that if they desire their clubs, a caddie or merchandise they are promptly served. My assistants are schooled to give our members fast, fine service and to anticipate members' wants whenever possible.

"Naturally, the pro shop must be clean

at all times. Clubs, showcases, tables, counters, floors, walls and merchandise must be kept cleaned continuously, not just daily or weekly.

"A stock of top representative lines of balls and clubs must be stocked, and selected after carefully considering what the members need and want.

Apparel Stocks Sell

"If a member wants a certain line I don't carry I do not try to change his mind but make sure that he or she gets what fits. I am constantly reminding my members that through a pro shop they get exclusive lines of the finest clubs and balls that possibly can be made, and that



this equipment is especially fitted to their individual games.

"In the pro shop there should be stocked everything a golfer wears on the course. You can't sell it if you don't have it; few members like to order merchandise sight unseen, and wait for delivery.

"I have found that by increasing my stock of slacks, shoes and shirts my sales of these items have greatly increased. You have to study your sales and experiment to learn what type of merchandise your members will buy. I have found that quality merchandise generally is the best seller but I must also handle a few price items. Try to keep your stock moving. When you find that you have items which have been in stock too long, put them on sale or give them as prizes.

"Study the methods of down-town merchants. They are the pros of merchandising. I have found that the best way to display shirts, slacks and hose is on tables or on shelves where the members can handle the merchandise. As far as I am concerned, showcases are for balls, gloves, head covers and such small items, only. Every item in my shop is clearly marked as to price.

"It is wise to departmentalize your shop by having men's clubs in one section, bags, putters, wedges, women's clubs, shirts, jackets, slacks, headwear and shoes, each in their own section of the shop rather than scattered around. It makes your stock look bigger and makes buying easier.

"I believe in changing displays periodically. I do everything my assistants and I can think of to keep the stock moving and looking clean and new.

"The ball case is placed at the farthest end of the shop which makes certain that members and guests come into the shop so they'll be exposed to the eye-appeal of all the merchandise.

"Apparel is a large item in keeping up my volume. Competition is strong from down-town stores but as the shop is much more convenient I get an edge. Members buy from you when you beat the competition in style and meet them in price. The pro has to keep looking and making sure of good taste in establishing his shop as a foremost style center. When I see how well dressed my members are as they come to the club I am reminded that it is part of my job to see that they can maintain the same excellent standard of dress on the course with what they can buy in my shop.

Caring for Youngsters

"A good caddie is an important factor in a member's enjoyment of a round. Therefore a first-grade caddie program must be planned and supervised by the pro. I advise, as the first step, to join

the Western Golf Assn., and get its caddie program material. The caddies must have incentives and some genuine personal interest and attention from the pro to get them working well and interested and happy in the job.

"I watch the members' reports on the caddies and see that the lads who aren't doing too well are instructed and helped and get their interest in the job sparked.

"Each Friday morning in the summer we conduct our juniors' program for youngsters from 8 through 16. We have a group lesson followed by play. The 8-through-10 group plays 3 holes only. Match play championships are held for boys 8-10, 11-13, 14-16, and flights for girls 8-10 and 11-16.

"There's so much to this wonderful business a fellow can—and must—keep learning something more about it every day. I rarely have a day when I can't pick up a good idea for my club and my business out of GOLFDOM and other publications, listening to my members, listening to and watching other professionals, and from salesmen."

Propose Collegiate Girls Golf Squads; Schedules

Mrs. Charles Dennehy, former amateur star whose daughter, Virginia, promises to be an even better golfer than her mother, suggested at the Women's Western Golf Assn. annual meeting that action must be taken in establishing girls' golf squads and inter-collegiate schedules at universities and colleges.

There is a national women's inter-collegiate golf championship played annually at Ohio State university, but outside of very few schools there are no girls' golf squads or intercollegiate team competition.

In view of the activity in male team competition at universities and the tremendous growth of women's golf this neglect of the coeds' golf obviously is something that calls for prompt attention by athletic directors and golf professionals at the schools. Golf writers covering the WWGA meeting couldn't explain or understand the failure to fill this gap in varsity competitive programs. The alert and energetic WWGA membership took to the idea as something requiring immediate and forceful promotion.

It's a matter that calls for professional promotion as certainly the girls' squads will require a lot of pro tutoring, will produce considerable publicity for pros, and the coeds' matches against women's teams of clubs will be interesting and most acceptable additions to women's programs at clubs besides being fine training for the coed's intercollegiate matches.