

Make Plans Now for Xmas Golf Gift Profits

By JOE GRAFFIS

WITHIN the next few weeks many professionals are going to determine whether 1953 will be just an ordinary year of income for them or a year of very good profit.

The answer will depend on planning the campaign for Christmas gift sales in the pro shops. It is difficult for a pro who is sweating on the teaching tee in August to begin thinking about what he's going to do to get big Christmas business but that's what the successful pro merchandiser has to do. The stores already are figuring on their campaigns for golf Christmas gift business and competition compels the foresighted pro to do likewise.

The development of Christmas gift business is a brilliant indication of the rapid progress of golf professional merchandising. December used to mean no pro shop income except in the south. Now it is the second biggest selling month of the year at numerous clubs all over the U. S.

December Top Sales Month

At a few clubs, where pros have made sales to company executives for supplying companies' customers with golf Christmas gifts, December pro shop sales volume is the largest of any month in the year.

GOLFDOM saw this Christmas business budding early. Like the apparel business in pro shops, the Christmas sales idea required a lot of nursing and at times GOLFDOM had its private worries about whether its editorial campaigning for more golf sales pressure for Christmas gift buying was getting anywhere.

Then, after World War II, the Christmas golf gift sales campaigns really began to score. What probably accounted for the jump in the business, more than anything else, was that pros in northern and central states decided to stay home where they had a chance to make money

around Christmas instead of rushing south in November.

Then, too, the lively, attractive advertising and sales work of a few energetic pro businessmen were paying off in Christmas sales so well other pros were learning what could be done.

Probably the first strong and highly successful pro campaign for Christmas business was made in the Chicago district by Chuck Tanis and Jerry Glynn. Tanis and Glynn had an advertising man who was a member at Chuck's club, Olympia Fields, prepare a very attractive illustrated gift suggestions booklet. The name and club of each pro was printed on the booklets sent to members of their respective clubs.

It was quite an expensive job but Glynn and Tanis by splitting the cost got a job that was more handsome, complete and effective than the golf gifts advertising any big store put out. The deal paid off a fine profit.

The Christmas golf gift buyers' guide idea is one that can be used by several pros in a community, with each taking their share of the costs of the booklets or folders. This sort of material must be prepared early as photographs and cuts must be made. Sometimes photographs of pro shops, with displays arranged especially for Christmas business, are used by pros in their holiday gift advertising and this requires work well in advance.

Ad men and printers who are club members provide invaluable help in preparation of this advertising.

Survey Your Market

Important in the preparation of the campaign is a survey of what members need as Christmas gifts. Any pro who waits until the season's over and the bags are out of the shop misses a great

HOLIDAY THEME IN PRO ADS →

The holiday note got into pro shop advertising early with Pat Markovich at Richmond (Calif.) CC writing the golfers' thanksgiving story in a bulletin that announced a ball sweepstakes with the entry fee being an old garment contribution to a charity affair.

Arrowhead G&C (Chicago dist.) holds open house with golf movies to introduce Christmas golf shopping period. The novel promotion proved successful in attracting a big turnout.

Henry Lindner, pro at Augusta (Ga.) CC, gets out 4-page folder presenting Christmas golf shopping list and enclosing gift certificate redeemable in shop merchandise or lessons.

Harold Sargent, East Lake CC, Atlanta, Ga., ties his Christmas advertising in with message about the value of professional selection and endorsement of golf merchandise.

Bob Gutwein, pro at Sunnehanna CC, Johnstown, Pa., mails to his members a folder describing Christmas golf gifts. Gutwein gets full benefit from folder by early mailing.

many tips on what would make sales at Christmas.

The growing importance of women's business calls for extra study and effort. Pros generally see that women's golf clubs are bought as gifts by the women's husbands. There's a tremendous market for women's equipment and accessory Christmas business.

The sportswear Christmas gift business for members' kids also has proved to be the source of big sales. The kids' golf club advertising also produces, at a lot of clubs, considerably more sales at Christmas than at any other time of the year.

Study of what playing equipment is going to be new in the market, and information on the new golf fashions, are essential in planning a successful Christmas gift campaign. Before long the manufacturers will have advance information on 1954 products available for pros.

Pros can't wait and go after Christmas business on a catch-as-catch-can basis. If

they do, the alert stores get the gravy. One store using golf bags as a Christmas gift feature sold more than 1500 bags. Most of them were sold to golfers whose business pros could have had with smart, special effort. The pros don't want to let that sort of business get away from them; it takes other golf business along with it.

Wipe your sweat off, as tired as you may be from late summer work, and start planning ahead right now for your Christmas business. It can show you a big profit, and what's especially good about it is that most of it is added business—sales that you otherwise might not make.

In September GOLFDOM there'll be more on the Christmas pro shop gift campaigning. Professionals who want to help their members get the right answers to Christmas shopping problems, as well as make a profit that will finance his off-season vacation and add to his bank balance, will make use of this selling help.

WHAT CHRISTMAS SALES IDEAS PAID OFF FOR YOU?

GOLFDOM wants to help all golf professionals get the public into the habit of making the pro shop a top spot for Christmas shopping.

So will you please send us copies of letters or other advertising material you used effectively in your own pro shop Christmas sales campaign last year? We want to print the material in GOLFDOM and help the live businessmen pros with an exchange of ideas pointing toward this year's Christmas selling opportunities.

Many thanks for your help in promoting a multi-million dollar Christmas gift business in pro shops.

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Mass. Ten Weeks' Turf Course Starts Jan. 4

Twenty-fourth annual 10 weeks' winter school for turf managers, conducted under the direction of Prof. L. S. Dickinson at University of Massachusetts, Amherst, will be held from Jan. 4, 1954 to March 12. Many supts. of famous golf courses are among the 390 graduates of this winter school.

As the course is limited to 25 men annually, all applicants are carefully screened on basis of experience and schooling. Final selection of candidates is to be made Nov. 2.

Final two days of the course, March 11 and 12, will be date of the annual Massachusetts turf conference.

Additional details of the course will be released later.

Information regarding qualifications may be secured from Prof. Dickinson at University of Massachusetts.

Celebrities Play to Pay for Caddie Tourney Prizes

The caddie will be king on Aug. 17!

On that date celebrities from throughout the United States will gather at the Scioto Country Club in Ohio's capital city for a benefit golf performance that will help provide more than \$5,000 in college scholarships for more than 100 boys who will begin competing in the National Caddie Tournament the next day.

That evening in Columbus, Paramount will stage the world premiere of its latest Martin and Lewis picture, "The Caddy," with Dean and Jerry both scheduled to be present. The boys will also be on the first tee when fellow-celebrities begin teeing off in the afternoon.

Proceeds from the premiere will be turned over to the National Caddie Association, and officials of that organization indicate they are in favor of turning over some of the proceeds to the PGA to help