

Open Display Makes Sales With Member Self-Service

By **DANNY JONES**

Professional, Shepard Hills Country Club, Waverly, N. Y.

MERCHANDISING by golf professionals to be thoroughly satisfactory must consider the merchandising service establishment primarily as a members' store rather than a pro shop.

The member often has business troubles of his own which he wants to forget when he comes to play golf. He doesn't leave his own work to think about how the pro can make a living. I don't go to a movie to think about the problems the motion picture industry has and I don't expect a member to come out to the club for fun and devote any attention to my business affairs.

What I want Shepard Hills members and their guests to realize is that the reason I have a pro shop there is to provide, con-

veniently and expertly selected, what they need for getting the most enjoyment out of golf. When they realize that then my own business interests are on a sound foundation.

"Pro shop," as Pat Markovich pointed out in a *GOLFDOM* article, actually is an outgrown label for the services the establishment offers. "Shop" was O.K. when the chief function of the place was making clubs to sell, and repairing clubs, but now the factory operations are limited to minor repairs.

Pro Store Is Essential

The pro shop has become a store. When it is properly located, stocked, designed for good display, and operated by competent, courteous men it is a facility as

Open display at the ball counter isn't often seen but Danny Jones says it sells more balls. A pleasant, vigilant shop boy with the sales register handy insures against loss.





Danny Jones, the cheerful party in the checked shirt, operates on the policy that the member should have merchandise displayed open to encourage close inspection, then the pro's expert service helps the buyer to decide correctly.

essential to member service at the club as the food, drink and bath facilities. In the clearest analysis the pro's sales facilities are fundamentally more important to the club than to the pro, not only because such facilities account for the greater part of the financing of the required first-class pro service without adding commensurably to the club payroll and other operating expenses but because they provide a service the club member or pay-as-you-play course golfer has a right to expect for the money he or she pays for golf.

The officials of our club looked at the pro department operation in that correct perspective. They recognized that a club of fine members should have pro department facilities of a standard up to the course and clubhouse.

Tied-in for Service

Now I am confident that there are few members' golf stores that are any more attractive and better fitted for member service than our bright and compact layout at Shepard Hills.

Time was just a few short years ago that

I had the problem (like many of my fellow pros) of the "remote" golf shop . . . the kind where the members would stick their heads in the doorway and ask for their caddies and then were on their way. My shop was pretty much a thing apart from most of the club's activity.

When the board of directors okayed my request for a new shop I immediately set about remedying the old isolated condition. The result is that my shop now is part of the club building proper with entrances from the shop to the men's locker rooms and the club lounge. Being so located means that all the golfers enter and leave through my shop, giving me a "natural" and continuous customer traffic.

Needless to say, I have enjoyed a satisfactory increase in business under these conditions.

However, location and traffic are not the only factors to be considered in the successful operation of a golf shop. Service and accessibility of the merchandise to the customers are "musts" in my book. I have taken a leaf from the five-and-tens' and



WALKER CUPPERS MUST PLAY IT "FAR AND SURE"

This is the 12th hole at Kittansett Club, Marion, Mass., one of many narrow fairways on the 6,518 yd., par 70 course that will make it tough on Walker Cup Match players, Sept. 4 and 5, who fail to put them "down the middle."

the big grocery chains' books and set up a real self-service business for every piece of golf equipment and apparel in my shop.

I have long since abandoned this idea of keeping golf balls in the so-called "protective custody" of the dust-gathering showcase.

Merchandise in the Open

Sure, I used to have showcases . . . not any more though. Now, I place golf balls, apparel and equipment right out in the open where every prospective customer can pick up the item, look it over, try it on for size and take it in the lounge and show it to the wife (this one backfires sometimes!)

All this means that whatever I'm selling is easier to buy. My sales have proven conclusively that the self-service golf shop pays off. Therefore I preach the gospel of attractive and neat displays and always OPEN displays. Even though I am not over-endowed with space. My shop is 22 ft. by 25 ft. I try at all times to spread my merchandise out in such a manner as gives the customer an easy opportunity to see the entire stock and variety at a glance.

If I have some line that is lagging, I place samples at strategic points calculated to catch the eye as you enter or leave the shop.

To sum up, I am of the opinion that you have to merchandise to sell and the best way I've found is the self-service and attractive display method.

Southern Cal. Turf Meet at Riviera, Oct. 12, 13

RECENT encounters with new turf problems will be a major topic of discussion at the 1953 Southern California Conference on Turf Culture to be held at the Riviera CC, Los Angeles, on October 12 and 13.

The meeting is sponsored by the College of Agriculture at UCLA and University Extension, in cooperation with the USGA Green Section.

The first day's program will include as speakers C. C. Simpson, Sr., chairman of the research advisory committee for the Experimental Program in Turf Culture; Vernon T. Stoutemyer, professor of floriculture and ornamental horticulture, College of Agriculture, UCLA; James R. Watson, Jr., chief agronomist, Toro Mfg. Co., Minneapolis; O. J. Noer, agronomist, Milwaukee Sewerage Commission; and Charles G. Wilson, regional director of the USGA Green Section—West Coast. Among topics scheduled are "Unconventional Ideas in Turf Culture," "Soil Compaction and Its Relation to Turf," "Thatch and Mat Control for Better Golfing Turf," and "Results of Turf Survey in Los Angeles County."

Printed programs are available on request to the department of conferences, University of California Extension, Los Angeles 24. Fee for the event is \$1.50.