

Robinson's Shop Shows New Ideas, Front and Back

By **BOB HALL**

A NEW class of stars has arisen in professional golf.

These are the fellows who make a good big business of merchandising golf.

Far more than generally is recognized these professionals have figured in the game's solid and great growth. They have been canny and diligent in doing a job of selling golf to the public. They've done that job better than any other sports market promotion ever has been done.

They've made their golf stores attractive and valuable services for players at private and public courses. They've developed golf interest, play and patronage in a way that has been directly responsible for the increase in tournament golf.

And they've certainly made shopping pleasant, convenient and good business for the golfers.

They've had to make good in a big way for golf, and build enthusiasm and play

because their income depends on having a lot of pleased customers.

They do a volume of business at private and public courses that provides a broad and needed service without added cost to the golfers.

These stars may have their orbits pretty well restricted to their own clubs or public courses and not shine in the headlines, but for their valuable and superior services their golfers are happy to see that these pros get, for services rendered, incomes that surpass the winnings of all but a dozen tournament celebrities.

Exhibit of Modern Shop Style

Among these stars who shine at their own clubs' lesson tees and golf shops is Joe Robinson, professional at the Virginia CC, Long Beach, Calif.

Virginia members and Robinson now are proudly showing a golf shop that is a



Picturesque setting is this approach to the Virginia CC pro shop and the first tee.

—Ruskauff photo



—Ruskauff photo

Visual control of entire shop can be maintained from repair bench. Bryce McCabe is working on a club grip.

prize exhibit of modern country club facilities.

Completed recently, the newly reconstructed pro shop at Virginia CC is now streamlined from the front door to the caddy quarters, both in shop arrangement and in personnel assignments and duties.

"Oh, the former shop was compact—and adequate, for the most part," Joe will tell you, "We were able to serve our members well, but not as thoroughly or completely as we desired.

"Especially were we finding a pinch in added playing membership, which gave us an increased flow through the shop, and

in the necessity of enlarging our display stock and in methods of merchandising."

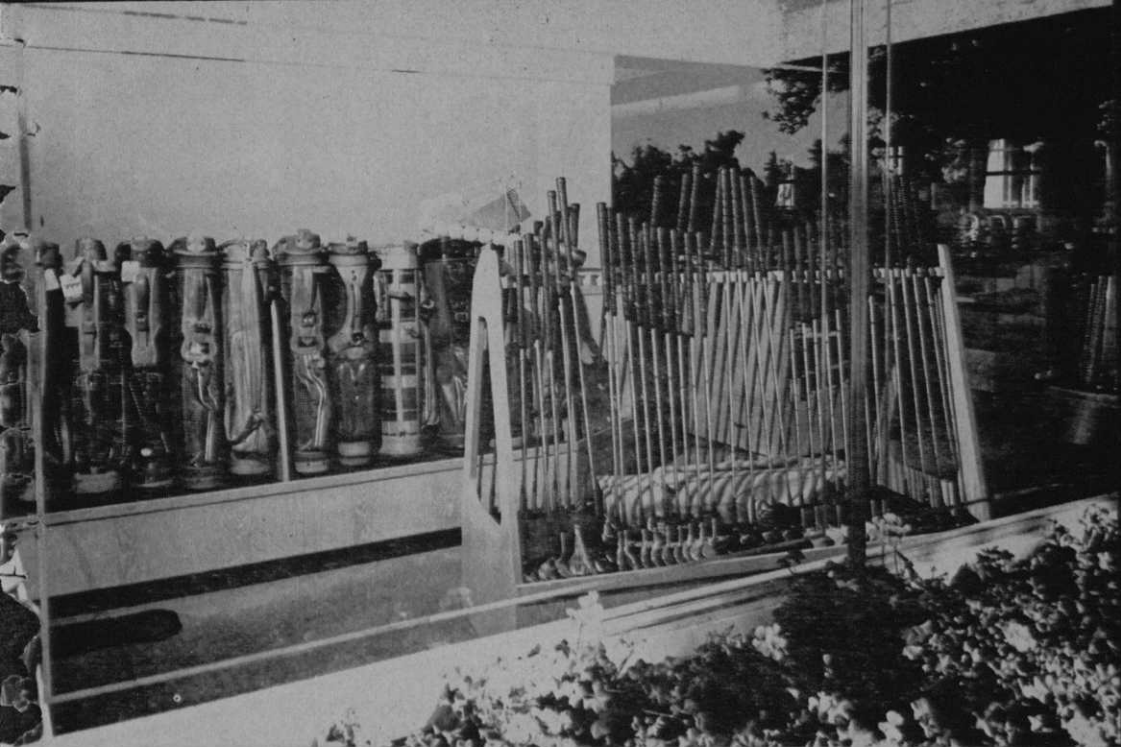
In planning the new shop Virginia CC officials and Robinson kept in mind the policy of the modern golf shop to present to members fine stocks of golf equipment and sports apparel under ideal suburban shopping conditions, and to have a layout that could be efficiently operated, in the display room and "back stage."

The professional at a country club has great competitive advantage over downtown stores in doing business in a convenient location. To this must be added attractive presentation of wisely selected



—Ruskauff photo

Cart storage stalls to right of store manager's office are for both rental and club member-owned carts.



—Ruskauff photo

This is the view which greets one from outside the bay windows near entrance of the Virginia pro shop. Custom built showcases and fixtures comparable to modern day apparel shops account for clean, bright, attractive display of merchandise in this shop.

—Ruskauff photo





—Ruskauff photo

Bag storage stalls are to left of the store manager's office. Note upright storage procedure.

quality merchandise in a cheerful, leisurely, "class" atmosphere.

All these factors are smoothly blended at the Virginia CC shop that will rate with any excellent specialty shop in any field of merchandising.

A casual glance at the pictures accompanying this article should bear out that fact.

In the reconstruction of the old Virginia CC shop, thought was given to placement of storage spots or inside "windows" to insure complete control of the entire shop by one attendant, if necessary.

Robinson, who came to the Virginia CC in 1948 after more than 20 years in the pro shop at Brentwood CC, Los Angeles, says the shop has proved to be the right answer in every operating respect. This

statement is echoed by Robinson's assistants Hugh Chamberlain and Bryce McCabe.

Hugh Chamberlain, formerly of Olympia, Wash., serves as general manager. Besides his supervision of the store and personnel, he receives all incoming merchandise and stock at his office "stock room" window in the rear of the shop. He tags every item, and enters it on the inventory sheets before it is placed on the shelves for sale, or stored away.

This eliminates clutter in the shop, and permits full attention to players.

It also enables Joe to have complete inventory control at all times.

Bryce McCabe, a long and trusted worker at the Virginia CC, who has progressed from caddy to caddymaster, now is Joe's assistant professional. He handles teaching engagements and when inside handles Robinson's bookkeeping and, with Chamberlain, aids Joe in providing expert sales service to Virginia's members and their guests.

Wide Scope in Shop Stock

In addition to extensive and judiciously chosen stocks of golf playing equipment and accessories and sports apparel of the most desirable lines, Robinson's shop also displays a decidedly attractive and profitable array of other gift merchandise, including jewelry, pottery, perfumes and linen items.

Those added gift lines give a significant indication of the extent to which women



—Ruskauff photo

Golf car garage is in the basement of the shop. Recharge and parking are available for 24 cars simultaneously.



—Ruskauff photo

Joe Robinson's spacious office is closed off in den-like fashion for comfort and better business transactions.

now are shopping in pro shops. These items, and the major stock of the shop also show plainly how the businessman in professional golf has become a successful specialty shop operator after having been rather pushed into that business by his sort of select customers.

Back of Shop Innovations

The back of the shop has many noteworthy features.

Note the illustrations, especially the new plan for golf bag storage. It's an upright storage, much as the method most pros use in display of golf clubs—rather than the wall-pocket or mail-box idea.

This plan of storage makes it possible to store nearly twice as many bags in an equal amount of space.

It also minimizes bag damage, which constantly has plagued members and golf pros who use the customary method of flat, mail-pocket storage procedure. There is no scraping of the plastic, fibre or leather material. And the bags are more easily handled by the shop assistant.

Between the two storage areas for bags and carts is the shop manager's office, the receiving room with inlet window, and a flanking window to the caddy contact area.

The repair bench, partitioned from the main store area by a huge two-way plate-glass window, is located between the bag and cart storage stalls and the office, thus enabling one shopman to handle repair work, storage of incoming and outgoing clubs and the store itself with full vision.

Another progressive thought is Joe's window inlet from the caddy room, which serves as bag entrance after the round is over. There is a wash basin in the caddy area, and the caddy himself is charged with cleaning the clubs he has carried

before he returns them to the pro shop for storage. He is asked also to report any needed repair both to clubs or bag.

This allows the incoming caddy sufficient time to clean the clubs adequately, the member and shop assistants time to arrange for the caddy's payment, and the shop personnel to check on the caddies as to interest and ability.

All down the line—members, guests, employees—the changes have been greeted with enthusiasm. It's the modern trend of the progressive businessman — increase your shop turnover efficiently and courteously, and you will not only have a better chance for more satisfied customers but more net profit.

Hopkins International Set for Washington in June

JOHN Jay Hopkins, founder and president of the International Golf Assn., is moving the competition for the International trophy and the Canada Cup to the United States for the first time in the three years of the matches.

Hopkins and Wm. J. Hannon, pres., Columbia CC, Washington, D. C. have announced that the matches will be played at Columbia June 9-12.

The first two competitions have been played in Montreal. Twenty-six countries each sent two of their star pros to play in the 1954 event for the Canada Cup. Australia, represented by Peter Thomson and Ken Nagle, won that one. Snead and Demaret as the U. S. team were third. Argentina won the 1953 Canada Cup contest. The Hopkins International trophy makes its debut this year.

Hopkins, one of the foremost industrialists of the U. S. and Canada, is in golf strong for its international goodwill promotion possibilities. As head of Convairst, among his numerous other interests, Hopkins also is angel for the San Diego Open.

Green Section Kept Busy

An indication of the tremendous service of the USGA Green Section appeared in the USGA annual report showing that in 1954 Green Sectional regional chiefs had made 438 consultation trips to courses, written reports on examinations of 365 courses, conducted 49 group meetings and attended 40 regional and national conferences.