

Prices Higher on 1956 Clubs to Meet Increased Costs

RETAIL PRICES of 1956 lines of woods and irons will increase from 4 to 10 per cent. The increase will apply to all grades of clubs.

Almost every other item of sports equipment also will increase in price, pushed upward by higher costs of labor and material.

The Wall Street Journal on August 25 quoted leading makers of golf clubs and other sports equipment giving, in some cases, the retail prices for the 1956 clubs. Uniform boosts in labor costs which are accountable for increased production costs of raw materials as well as the finished products, and the competitive situation, will keep the 1956 retail prices level among all the leading manufacturers.

Unofficial comment in the golf club industry usually is to the effect that during recent years increased volume has made it possible to maintain established retail prices, but that now cost increases have forced price raises comparable with those of other utilitarian products and services.

The increase in retail prices of golf clubs will involve an increase in pros' and other retailers' margins.

Pro Costs Cause of Concern

Wilson Sporting Goods Co. Pres. Fred J. Bowman said about the larger pro gross profit from the new prices on clubs:

"The increased costs of pro department operation at golf clubs is a matter of serious concern to ourselves and other manufacturers of quality golf clubs. Salaries of assistants and club-cleaning boys have jumped up and often without commensurate adjustments in the pro's financial arrangement with his club.

"There also has been a great and in-

creasing demand from the golfing public for valuable but unpaid services which take considerable of the time of the professional and his staff. This demand is the result of progressive professionals establishing a broad and helpful character of customer service rarely equalled in merchandising.

"The development has caught the pros in the middle as the club member seldom realizes that although he needs, expects and gets comprehensive expert service from his pro staff his club, in many cases, might not be able to afford this service. Therefore the pro in supplying an essential merchandising and advisory service to the golfers must finance most of his other services to players out of the net on his retailing profits.

Pro Pays Member Service Costs

"This condition, unfortunately, is not known to many to whom the experience of private club membership, with its accompanying obligations, is novel. The oversight of club officials in not educating the many new members who have come into clubs in recent years has pros paying for the free service given to quite a few of the newcomers who are ignorant of the basis of pro business.

"Our own company and other prominent makers of golf playing equipment are confident that the new price structure on golf clubs will to a most necessary degree improve the pros' net position. It also will ease heavy pressure of increased production costs on manufacturers."

Bowman's view fits in with the pros' worry about increasing costs of doing business in the way they want to operate

to please players and officials at their clubs.

One sidelight on how these costs have mounted has been related frequently to GOLFDOM in pros' comment on club-cleaning and storage.

It used to be that the club-cleaning and storage charges collected at the start of a season greatly helped a pro finance the shop stock he needed to satisfactorily serve his members.

But now the wages that are commanded by club-cleaning boys at private clubs in metropolitan districts take so much out of the club-cleaning and bag storage income there's not enough left over to finance stock at a country town 9-hole public course shop.

Pro Shop Style Show Scores With Sales

AT ALMOST every club and pay-play course these days you will see many women smartly attired in golf apparel that gives them free action for their swings as well as being charming in appearance.

Selling women's apparel in pro shops often is a delicate job although the sweaters and Bermuda shorts and headware are safe staples. But beyond that the style and merchandising genius of the pro's wife is the safety factor.

At the LaGrange (Ill.) CC pro Jim Foulis' wife and members of the women's

golf committee put on a style show with items from the pro shop that was excellent sales promotion and a feature of great interest to women golfers and their guests.

There were 19 models—club members—and they made 23 changes. Three of the members modeled with their French poodles as accessories, giving the show a touch of down-town showmanship.

The girls really showed professional modeling talent, according to Mrs. Foulis, and the show was a "huge success." Mrs. Foulis herself is shown in one of the pictures with a skirt, blouse, sweater and cap from the pro shop stock.

Bill O'Hara, Jim's assistant, and rated by Jim as a fine teacher and shop man, modeled some of the clothes for men in getting the girls stirred with ideas of what to buy for Daddy. Bill models in Miami in the winter.

They even got Jim to show off some clothes. "Never underestimate the power of a woman." When the members and guests saw Jim arrayed tastefully as a golfing Student Prince the sight helped shop business.

This matter of pros and their assistants modeling their shop stock of apparel items always works well. Harry Obitz makes a strong point of this at Shawnee CC and it sells a large volume of merchandise.



Models and apparel are basic to every style show but the pro's wife plays the leading role in the show built around apparel items available from the pro shop. "Models" in the LaGrange (Ill.) CC show were members of the women's golf committee with an assist from professional Jim Foulis and his assistant, Bill O'Hara. Shown (L to R) are: O'Hara, Mrs. Foulis, Jim, Mrs. W. F. Hendrickson and Mrs. J. E. Rhode.