

## Develop Telephone Technique to Increase Pro Shop Sales

By HARVEY BUNN

Professional, Tualatin Country Club, Tualatin, Ore.

THAT telephone in your pro shop isn't just an instrument of communication, but a means of doing business. You can make it work for you in building goodwill, and thereby increased profits, if you're willing to work with it. Other businessmen, and even professional men, are doing it, so why shouldn't you follow their example?

I'm going to discuss three profit-building ideas I think can be successfully used with the telephone. I am indebted to Dave Killen, Eastmoreland GR and Tom Ely, Columbia-Edgewater CC, both of Portland, for suggesting Profit-Builder No. 1, while Nos. 2 and 3 are my ideas.

No. 1 has to do with telephone technique. You may or may not realize it, but telephone technique, or lack of it, especially when you pick up the receiver to answer a call, can be the difference between making or losing a sale. Let's look into this!

### Don't Be Curt

If you pick up your receiver and say, "Hello!" or "Hello, Mercury 9-3590!" you leave the party at the other end dangling. Usually, there follows an awkward pause which often unnerves the caller. About three times out of four, your conversation with him is going to end on a "No Sale" note.

A curt "Pro Shop!" or "Golf Shop!" barked into the mouthpiece, isn't going to help your sales effort, either.

Both Dave Killen and Tom Ely recom-

mend a personalized touch. It's as simple as "Edgewater Pro Shop, Ed Miller speaking," spoken in a pleasant, businesslike tone. It immediately identifies you and your business and puts the caller at ease. If he has called with the intention of ordering some item in your shop, you may be able to sell him a second item by suggestion, because your friendly tone upon answering the phone has put him in a receptive mood. Even if his call has nothing to do with buying anything, you still may be able to work in a sales pitch with some success simply because you've given him that personalized greeting.

If you don't think there's something to telephone technique make your own test by calling two or three local department stores and see how you respond to the different ways in which they answer their phones.

Profit builder No. 2 has to do with notifying players of club tournament deadlines. Once again, it doesn't add up to a direct telephone sales approach, but it's a fine way to build goodwill. After qualifying scores are turned in and tournament pairings are made, it falls to the pro to notify members of the date and time their matches have to be completed. A postcard may be more convenient for this, but postcards have a way of being ignored or going astray. A telephone call is far more effective. The member appreciates the personal attention he gets and, once again, his mood is receptive. If you think it appropriate, you can slip in a sales suggestion — but, by all means, be subtle about it.

Probably by now you're saying this is a fine idea, but doesn't it take a lot of time

This article has been condensed from a speech by Harvey Bunn to Northwest Section PGA members at a recent educational meeting in Portland, Ore.



### JOE KIRKWOOD, JR. OPENS GOLF AND SPORTS CENTER AT HOLLYWOOD

Joe Kirkwood, Jr., opens the first units of a golf and sports center at North Hollywood, Calif., that eventually will show an investment of \$1,800,000. The clubhouse and practice range are operating and the 18-hole par 3 course on 45 acres and night-lit will open this month. Greens are patterned after those of famous holes. A bowling alley, ice skating rink, badminton courts and swimming pool will be constructed.

to call perhaps 100 members and notify them of the dates they're scheduled to play? I'll concede that it does, but the goodwill you'll create will be well worth the effort.

#### Christmas Selling

I used the telephone before Christmas to personalize Christmas gift selling in my pro shop. It was very successful and I recommend it as a third profit-building idea.

After sending out GOLFDOM's "Christmas Shopping at your Pro Shop" with a personal letter addressed to wives, husbands, parents or even children of club members, I waited two or three days before following up on the telephone. In practically all cases, catalogue and letter had been received, and I was able to get into my sales message without delay.

Here is an example of what I said: "Mrs. Jones, what do you think of that suggestion of a set of woods as a Christmas gift for Mr. Jones?" If the reaction was the least bit favorable, I followed with the usual leading questions in order to get Mrs. Jones to definitely commit herself one way or another. If she decided she didn't want to invest in a set of clubs for her husband, I switched over to trying to sell her golf balls, wearing apparel and other items I have in the shop.

In rare instances where catalogue and letter failed to reach the person for whom they were intended, it was necessary to give

a rather detailed explanation of why I was calling. Even here the telephone proved to be a real ally since several of these people suddenly decided a golf gift was a wonderful idea and either ordered on the spot or asked me to send another copy of the catalogue so they could pick out a present.

I don't know how much use other pros are making of the telephone. As far as I'm concerned, it has become the most potent sales aid in my shop, and in the future I intend to use it even more extensively than I have in the past for profit building.

### Three Events Scheduled Between Dallas Tourneys

A series of three between tourney events has been scheduled for the \$100,000 Dallas Centennial and Texas International Opens which open at Dallas' Preston Hollow CC May 24 according to an announcement by J. J. Ling, chmn. of the board of Golf International, Inc. The featured tournament events are a Pro-Amateur tourney which will be held May 29 at Preston Hollow, and a Pro Youth meet to be held the following day.

Earl Stewart, Jr., resident pro for Oak Cliff CC, announced earlier this month his club will host a pro-am tourney on May 28. Present plans call for a purse of \$5,000.