

Trade-in allowances on clubs to a marked degree have offset competition of the discount stores and other retailers and have accounted for a pretty good percentage of sales of top grade new clubs. Trade-ins also have helped a lot to supply juniors and other beginners. The trade-in allowances don't seem to have been as wild this year as in 1955 but still are dangerous.

The 153 new courses opened this year probably represent a greater part of the gain in number of rounds played this year. Play at courses that were closed upon being sold for residential or business sites is reported to have been absorbed by existing courses which now are at convenient capacity.

In every section women's golf play increased this year. As closely as pro authorities can figure, it accounts for about 25 per cent of the total rounds of play which is expected to near 70,000,000 for the year. In several sections women's play is increasing by 50 per cent over last year. Frequently pros reported that about 30 per cent of the play in their districts was by women.

But the volume of women's business at pro shops still hasn't kept pace with the increase in women's play. At only about 20 per cent of the clubs is women's buying at pro shops in line with the extent of their play. Whether this is because a woman doesn't buy golf goods at the rate a man does, or whether the women are buying golf goods elsewhere, isn't clear yet. But more pros are putting more accent on merchandising to women golfers.

Pros' estimate of the amount of business in golf equipment that their players do outside the pro shops ranges from 10 to 50 per cent. The national average, according to reports to GOLFDOM this year, is about 31 per cent. On a dollar-and-cents basis that isn't too far out of line with manufacturers' association figures and the distribution of private, semi-private and public courses.

Junior Picture Bright

Again, the brightest long range view of the entire pro business picture was junior golf. In almost every section junior golf increased and in no section was a loss in junior play or lessening of junior golf interest reported. Several sections mentioned increases of from 60 to 100 per cent in junior class participation and play over last year.

Only a few pros reported that cost of doing pro shop business in their sections

Home Pro Appreciation



More than 250 persons gathered at Sylvania CC, Toledo, O., recently to honor Lou Chiapetta, who has been pro there for 19 years, at an appreciation dinner. Lou (at left) slices into a cake while from (l to r), Dr. Norman Mathieson, Sylvania pres., Marty Cromb, Northern Ohio PGA pres. and Harry Moffitt, national PGA pres. study his wrist action.

this year was approximately the same as in 1955. In 27 sections pro department operating costs hiked, sometimes as much as 25 per cent over the previous year. The national average of reported increase in operating costs was 10½ per cent.

Problems that the pro authorities believe will be tough ones in 1957 are:

- Increasing costs of pro operation;
- Difficulty of getting qualified and ambitious assistants who are willing to work for incomes the business can afford to pay;
- Increasing pro department revenue;
- Closer watch of inventories, trade-ins and search for economies that won't decrease standard of service;
- Better display;
- Getting officials to educate members in their reciprocal obligations to the professional;
- Overcoming resistance to higher prices of golf goods;
- Manufacturers' deliveries;
- How far to go with cheaper playing equipment in balancing pro shop stocks.

Weitzel Dies Following Crash

John Weitzel, 33, Hershey, Pa. pro, died on Sept. 18 from internal injuries suffered nine days before in an automobile accident. Winner of the Pennsylvania Open in 1955 and 1956, Johnny was signed to the Golf-craft advisory staff last spring. He was a Purple Heart veteran of World War II and had been at Hershey CC since 1953.