

Pros Swing Into Xmas Gift Sales Campaign

By JOE GRAFFIS

GOLF professionals, on a broader front than ever, have swung into action that points to a new record for this year's pro shop Christmas gift selling.

A noticeable increase in sales of pro shop merchandise as Christmas gifts started about five years ago. Prior to that, pro attention to the Christmas gift business was limited and geographically spotty. Now the golf Christmas gift business has a major place in pro shop operations and is on a nationwide scale, giving the pros' sales campaign the added strength of concerted effort.

Pro shop Christmas gift selling programs got the impetus that now has established them as an important service of pros to players and a major source of profit when GOLFDOM introduced "Christmas Shopping At Your Pro Shop" three years ago.

This booklet, bearing each participating professional's name, club, address and telephone number on the cover, is credited by professionals with:

(a) Producing considerably more than \$1,000,000 in additional pro shop sales volume;

(b) Halting the inroad store Christmas golf gift competition was making on pro shop business;

(c) Accenting the extent and exclusiveness of pro shop stocks, quality, expert shopping counsel and pro shop convenience as a combination that draws business previously going to competing retailers; and

(d) Serving club members, including non-golfing wives and public course players, with authoritative and helpful advice and superior values.

Expect Sellout

This year's edition of 140,000 copies of "Christmas Shopping At Your Pro Shop" undoubtedly will be a complete sellout as were the previous two issues. Although

some copies are held back to accommodate a few late-ordering professionals, they have been quickly exhausted in past years.

"Christmas Shopping At Your Pro Shop" now is being shipped to professionals. The professionals address the envelopes to their lists of prospective buyers and mail the book so Christmas shopping can be done early at the pro shop.

Numerous professionals have their Christmas golf gift campaigns completed in October or November, then go onto winter jobs. Some professionals in the northern states conduct the selling from their homes in November and December and open their pro shops for shoppers on Saturdays and Sundays. In several instances, northern pros, who have winter jobs in the south or west, have their assistants take care of the Christmas business at the northern clubs.

Shop decorations and displays accent the Christmas gift theme early. Women, especially, like to get shopping for golf gifts out of the way before the 11th hour.

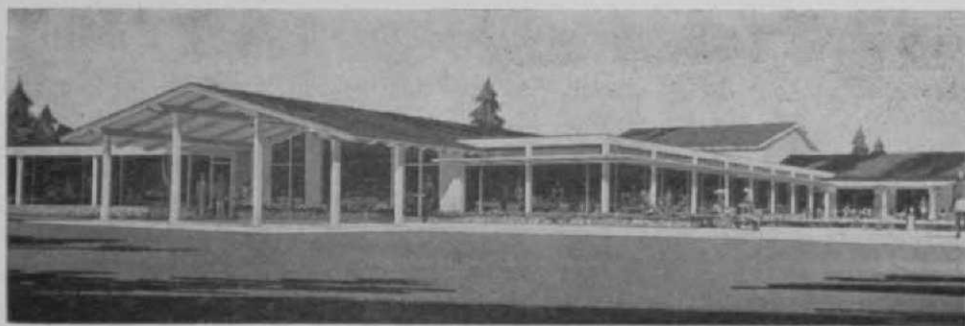
Professionals frequently are reminded by club members that buying Christmas gifts at a pro shop is done at a time when club charges are much lower than during the heavy playing season; hence, the gift charges aren't painful.

Apparel Business Increased

Many professionals have advised GOLFDOM that "Christmas Shopping At Your Pro Shop" has brought women into pro shops for the first time and has produced a considerable amount of apparel business, much of it in items for sons and daughters.

A common experience with professionals is to sell as Christmas gifts, merchandise the pro thought he was going to have to keep until next season.

Pros have found that getting into the Christmas selling program early not only is a valuable service to their customers but greatly increases the amount of sales with a quick turnover on capital in stock.



\$250,000 Being Spent on Los Altos Improvement

Work was started in August on a \$250,000 improvement of Los Altos G & CC, Palo Alto, Calif. New facilities will include a garden court lounge, dining room, men's grill, kitchen, parking area, practice green, swimming pool and tennis courts. Above is artist's version of how the clubhouse will look when completed; below, the men's grill



Professionals have advised GOLFDOM that mailing the Christmas Shopping guide as early as September, before the stores have smothered customers with sales promotion, has accounted for selling hundreds of dollars worth of items displayed in the book but not then in stock at their shops. Thus, there is still plenty of time for getting shipments in to handle the extra business.

One field for Christmas sales that is growing rapidly in response to professionals' smart work is that of golf gifts bought by businessmen for presentation to their customers.

Personalized golf ball sales are very big and getting bigger because a dozen pro-only balls bearing a customer's name and presented in an attractive Christmas package continues to advertise pleasantly, diplomatically and effectively for months.

Pros who have gone after company orders in the highly popular personalized ball line have reaped dividends from their efforts especially where bad weather slowed ball sales as it did during the past spring and early summer. Corporation gift ball volume has put ball sales of the pros, who went after this business, well ahead of the previous 12 months. The pros also note that a fellow who gets a dozen gift balls isn't reluctant to get rid of them when they become battered.

Professionals have received a suggested

copy of a letter that can be tied in with the Christmas shopping book in the campaign directed at business officials buying gifts for customers.

Telephone calls by pros and their assistants to members and their wives advising them of the Christmas shopping service have proved very profitable for the pro department.

Professionals who have done the most in Christmas golf business are those who have checked the contents of bags in storage and compiled written lists of what is needed by the various players. Such a list helped sell 42 wedges for one pro last year.

The pro, and in many cases, his wife, can make out a shopping list name by name for the club members and from their own knowledge of the member and his family can compile a specific record that will be of invaluable service to pro shop patrons.

Such a list as the basis for planning a Christmas golf gift campaign has the extra value of showing the professional plainly just what his over-all market should be.

Quick and substantial returns from the Christmas golf gift sales campaign are what the pro should be working for to wind up his year in very satisfactory credit, inventory and cash positions. Many professionals have found that Christmas gift selling has rewarded them with added sales, that stack right up with big volume spring months.