

# Over the PRO SHOP Counter

## Sales Expert Tells Where Pros Miss Profits

BY HERB GRAFFIS

In digging up material for the campaign *Golfing* magazine has been running to educate club members to do more business with their pros I have consulted many club members who are successful salesmen as well as enthusiastic golfers.

I've told these merchandising experts what the pro often is up against when members haven't the slightest idea that one of their duties as members of a private club is to buy from the pro so he can finance the service his department provides to the club.

In a number of cases the salesmen themselves haven't realized that the pro doesn't have a guaranteed attractive wage at a club but has to sell enough merchandise and lessons to support himself and make the job one that will draw the sort of a first class pro the club wants and needs.

Several of these salesmen have pointed out in valuably cooperative letters and interviews that a lot of times the pro himself may be to blame for the member not being aware that he should give the pro his golf merchandise business.

One of the nation's noted salesmen, a man whose orders are tremendous and who is a wizard at training other salesmen, says many professionals could be better salesmen. He goes into some detail:

### What is Selling?

"I imagine the pro at whom this criticism might be directed would reply 'Wad-daya mean, 'salesman'? I sold 40 sets of woods last year! Isn't that selling?'

"From that point on there'd be an explanation required. There is more to selling than merely moving merchandise off the shelves.

"I am one of those guys who buys every piece of equipment I can from the pro at my club. But the brothers who play with me don't feel that way. A buck is a buck to them. So they bring clubs in from Cleve-

land and Chicago and New York. It's not because they can't afford the extra dollars, it's just because they think they are saving money.

"One of my friends at a convention in the east recently told me that he had bought a set of a certain fine brand of woods from his pro and paid well over \$100 for them, but the pro didn't offer to look at his swing or give him a five minute free lesson or a few helpful suggestions to show some interest in the good use of the clubs.

### Missed Additional Profit

"The pro must have made a pretty good gross profit on that set of clubs but he missed a chance to make a lot more money out of my friend. My friend was allowed to get the idea that there is nothing different between buying from his pro and buying any place else that good clubs can be bought. A store also turns over the clubs to the customer and takes the cash and that's the end of the deal.

"In the old days when I sold a woman a stove I called after it was delivered to see that she understood how it worked. Maybe that wasn't selling but it was good public relations and advertising. My customers advertised me and word got around that I was very much interested in more than the customer's money and took some time to make sure that the product worked well.

"Considering what first class clubs cost these days the pro has to make his personal interest and service part of the price of the clubs if a club member or a man or woman golfer at a public course is going to have any particularly strong reason for preferring to do business with the pro.

"The way that competition and "buy it wholesale" deals are these days, you sometimes wonder what you've got to do to get the straight retail price. The answer is to give the buyer more attention and more follow-up and more cheerful expert service than he would get anywhere else. That bonus is actually worth money to the buyer.

"The successful pro and his shop assistants always are selling personality along with the merchandise.

"Sometimes the pro can get an idea of what he is up against on competitive price selling, and probably think of suggestions for solving the problem, if he will think about what he himself has bought wholesale, and how some superior merchants might have sold him the same, or a better, product at the retail price."