

# 1958 Business Outlook for the Professional

By HENRY P. COWEN

Pres., The MacGregor Co., Golf Div.

As the golf industry prepares for another active season, it is reasonably safe to forecast that prospects appear bright for next year. Top economists are predicting a modest but steadily rising level of general business activity in 1958 and the golf market happily should reflect similar conservative but equally optimistic gains.

Although the current year's collective sales report of the club and ball manufacturers are not yet available, it is fairly apparent that no dazzling new all-time records have been established, yet it is expected that unit volume will be very nearly on a par with 1956. In the light of generally poor weather conditions in many sections of the country, even far more extended and far-reaching than last year, the obviously significant and encouraging factor is the continuing upturn in the number of golf participants.

When the score is added, the National Golf Foundation, through its expanded services and impressive record of accomplishment, must be credited in large measure for this healthy gain in course facilities and overall golf activity.

There seems to be no end to the upward hike in material, labor and operational costs but prices for golf equipment at both the wholesale and retail levels are increasing only nominally and should not be a deterrent to either new or replacement sales.

Factory production, construction, employment, consumer income and spending are pictured generally in a favorable light for 1958, and the outlook is promising for a continuance of brisk business. This should mean another good year for golf.

By FRED J. BOWMAN

Pres., Wilson Sporting Goods Co.

Golf professionals next year should certainly realize a much improved year in total sales volumes, and consequently, in net profit.

The primary basis for this forecast is the fact that next year will present a greater number of golfers than ever before due to the continuing growth in the number of courses; the increasing number of employee recreation golf programs sponsored by industrial firms; the greater number of schools offering golf instruction as part of their physical education program; the increasing number of women who are taking up the game of golf; and last, but certainly not least, the increasing adoption of lesser working hours by industry, thus permitting employees a greater amount of leisure time for sports participation.

Another reason for this anticipated increase in golf professional sales volume figures is the belief that we will not encounter the bad weather that most sections experienced in 1957. Blessed with a reasonable amount of good golfing weather, more rounds of golf will be permitted, thus affording greater sales opportunity for the pros.

Improvements in design and style of 1958 golf equipment, demanded by golfers, afford the pro another avenue for the promotion of sales. With a variety and assortment of clubs on hand in various lengths, weights and shaft flex, the professional can offer his members the clubs suited to their game—clubs that will give them the tools with which to achieve their best competitive effort.

Pride of ownership also offers the pro another sales outlet, since a person, who wishes to be equipped with the newest clubs, can afford new equipment because of the wide selection available in various price ranges.

To capitalize on these factors, however, the professional must do a top promotion job. Since the pro shop is generally the hub or center of activity of every club or course, and since practically every member is a regular shop visitor, the professional should capitalize on sales opportunities by energetic and appealing merchandise displays.

Here I might point out that sales-minded professionals should concern themselves with not only equipment sales, but should feature and highlight apparel and accessory items. In striking colors and changing styles to keep pace with the trend of the day, these apparel and accessories are popular sale items as they appeal to both men and women. Women in particular should not be overlooked as prospects for sales. They represent a great part of the purchasing power of the golf equipment market.

Manufacturers of golf equipment will continue, through engineering, research and development and field testing, to spend time and money in the constant improvement of equipment. All lines in 1958 reflect these advancements, including the new shaft, the greatest shaft construction improvement in the last 20 years.

**By GURDON LESLIE**

Manager, True Temper Corp.

Each of the four flexes of the new True Temper Pro-Fit line of shafts developed for 1958 top clubs of leading manufacturers has been carefully designed to meet requirements of each manufacturer.

The shafts are produced from a new CMB Timken steel and incorporate carefully controlled elements of chrome, manganese and boron.

These shafts should be decided influences in increasing golf club sales of 1958 top lines because of the unmistakable advance in construction and performance which they represent.

They encompass the successful experience of the True Temper Corp. in making more than 60 million shafts during the past 30 years.

The elements of the new Pro-Fit shafts are perfectly balanced.

The shaft weight is of great importance due to its effect on the overall weight and balance of a finished club. The shaft deflection, which is largely controlled by diameter and wall thickness is of equal importance as the proper degree of shaft flexibility must be built into a golf club if best results are acquired. The physical properties resulting in shaft strength must be maintained to a high degree of uniformity so that shafts will not bend or break. Shaft torsion and proper control of such torsion has for years been a controversial subject, but is a very important stabilizing factor in the control of the club head during the swing and at the time of impact.

**By J. C. BRYDON**

V. P., The Worthington Ball Co.

After a slow start on account of rain, Worthington golf ball sales picked up to the extent that 1957 will be one of our very good years.

Our salesmen report that prospects of good Christmas gift ball business, orders for winter resort courses and for spring delivery present a bright picture.

Our sales of golf range balls this year was well ahead of last year's highly satisfactory volume.

The increase in the number of courses open in 1958 and the certainty of many more new golfers next year show cheerful prospects for golf business.

**By WALTER B. GEROULD**

Pres. A. G. Spalding Bros. Inc.

We, at Spalding, feel that the most important development in 1957 has been the generally increased golfing interest. Statistics prove that more golfers are playing more rounds of golf and are buying better quality equipment. As a result, 1957 has been an excellent golfing business year for us.

There are many factors which we feel favorably affect golf in 1958. The first factor is one that we must assume will be favorable and that is weather conditions permitting early and regular play; and second, that the general economic pattern throughout the country is favorable to appreciably increased golf play. Other factors of major importance are the increased leisure time and the growing youth population.

It behooves every one interested in golf to work with the junior golfers of today, who will be the grown-up golfers of tomorrow, to interest them in golf as a lasting sport. Availability of golf courses is an additional factor and one to which great attention should be paid.

The work the National Golf Foundation is doing in the development of more and more courses all the time is essential to have golf assimilate the ever increasing number who want to participate in the game.