



Paul Runyan

## Runyan and His Two Specialists

*Frequent trips to the market, awareness of what the competition is doing make the pro operation at La Jolla a booming one*

By CHUCK CURTIS

**P**AUL RUNYAN, famed as a tournament player since the early 1930's, has achieved distinction in the field of golf shop merchandising at La Jolla CC, near San Diego, Calif.

His shop sells as much in the way of soft goods merchandise (clothing and equipment apart from golf clubs and balls) as it does in actual golf equipment.

Sixty percent of all sales to women are in apparel.

Forty percent of the sales to men are in this category.

What's the secret of Runyan's amazing success in sales of clothing, particularly to women, when pro shops not too many years ago did little more than sell clubs and balls?

"We are fortunate in having a man in the shop who understands ladies' wear."

That is Runyan's ready answer to the question: "What is the best feature of your shop?"

### Has Top Assistants

The man is Jack Taylor, who remained as shop assistant at La Jolla when Runyan took over the pro position three years ago. Taylor had been a foreman in the Stan Thompson golf shop factory before becoming an assistant pro. Although an excellent teacher, he now devotes himself exclusively to shop work.

Runyan's life partner, his wife, Joan, also is credited with much of the success of the merchandising program.

A hobby of hers in recent years, the designing of golf hats and handbags for women, has paid off handsomely with

orders received from many parts of the world. She employs stock materials and decorates with brightly colored ribbons and golf insignias including tees.

Runyan is buyer for clubs and balls. Taylor buys gloves and golf bags. Mrs. Runyan has done all buying of soft goods



Mrs. Runyan has parlayed a hobby of designing golf hats and handbags that brings orders from all over the world.



but is now breaking in Taylor on this part of the work.

Mrs. Runyan and Taylor arrange all displays in the shop, which, although not large, utilizes every available bit of space for display.

Runyan does not believe in a massive display of clubs. Only a few sets of new clubs, taken out of the boxes and arranged along a wall, are in view. A used club bin near the main counter is kept full.

"We may be wrong in not showing more clubs," says Paul. "That's entirely possible. Merchandising surveys in grocery stores indicate that massed displays tend to sell more of an item."



La Jolla's display of golf clubs is somewhat smaller than usual but is adequate, according to Runyan. This is because emphasis is on keeping everything in the shop moving.

But in his shop the limited display of clubs has given more room for the clothing and produced more sales in the latter field. Paul has a hunch that playing equipment sells itself to a certain extent.

The La Jolla pro shop follows department store routine in clothing merchandising and purchasing.

### They Go to Market

Mrs. Runyan and Taylor attend market weeks in Los Angeles when the finest and smartest sportswear for men and women is displayed by wholesalers. Showings in November for the spring 1958 selling attracted Mrs. Runyan, for example.

In addition, she attends merchandising clinics and carefully watches better stores and shops in the San Diego area for new



Arrangement of all merchandise is handled by Mrs. Runyan and assistant pro, Jack Taylor. La Jolla shop compares in appearance with finest seen in Southern California.

ideas in display, styles or clothing lines.

Runyan is fortunate in having Mrs. Runyan and Taylor at his shop. He points out that Mrs. Runyan's only formal training which is of help now was a course in textile designing at the Otis Art Institute in L. A. Taylor has learned pro selling in a golf shop.

What about pricing on clothing lines? Is Runyan competitive?

"We're more than competitive. We have to be. If we find that a store is selling a comparable item at a price lower than ours we match it immediately," Runyan says.

"We have a line of slacks under the same brand name as those carried by a nearby store. Their price was lower than



An assistant checks the busy Runyan teaching schedule. Display below cash register features sweaters and shirts rather than the customary golf balls which are displayed alongside clubs.

ours. So we cut ours to match although actually our line is a superior grade in fabric."

"It has only been in the past five years that most professionals have become aware of the need for men's and ladies' golfing wear," Runyan points out. But he is firm in one point — he will not stock anything that is not used for golf.

Some resort area pro shops, though, have widened into the entire field of men's and women's wear.

But the change to all-around merchandising is gradual, for Runyan believes that the nationwide average shows that pro shop purchases by men are 85 percent in golf clubs and golf balls.

Paul was away from golf for five years as a jewelry manufacturer's representative in the Southern California area.

Although he was travelling, visiting jewelry outlets rather than selling on a

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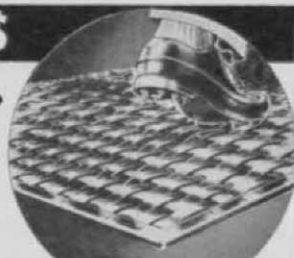
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## Runyan and His Specialists

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retail level, he feels the experience was worthwhile.

"I saw what a large part display can mean in retail sales," he says. "Jewelry shops that glamorized their merchandise had the largest sales."

Runyan carries an inventory of from \$17,500 to \$25,000. About 40 percent of this is in golf equipment.

He does not keep any regular pro shop hours himself. His wife helps at times and two fulltime assistants, Taylor and Mike Butler, run it at other times.

### Don't Have to Be Golfers

Runyan is unusual in that he does not feel it necessary for shop assistants to be expert golfers, or to even play golf.

"I do think it is a good idea for them to know something of the tradition of golf, the famous players of the past, the great tournaments, etc.," he says.

One guarantee Runyan asked of the La Jolla directors in taking the pro shop was that the club would handle the billing and guarantee payment of bills by mem-

bers. He sends the club office a memo on the first of every month as to the amount owed by a member. The member can see the itemized bill at the golf shop.

"It is impossible for the club pro to have to assume personal responsibility for payments to his suppliers unless he has guaranteed payment from the club. After all, the club can suspend a member for non-payment of obligations but the pro has no such power," Runyan says.

### Canadian Open

The 1958 Canadian Open Championship, which will be played at Mayfair G & CC, Edmonton, Alberta, Aug. 20-23, offers \$25,000 prize money to the pros. First place money is \$3,500. Seven special prize awards will be made to low finishers among Canadian pros. This is the 49th playing of the Canadian Open.

New officers of the Iowa GCSA are: Wes Letze, Waveland GC, Des Moines, pres.; Ralph Zegarac, Sunnyside GC, Waterloo, vp.; and John R. Raher, Des Moines G&CC, secy-treas.



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