



Keeping up with fads is important, says Pro George Heaney (left). Golfing elders know as much about them as younger players.

(Below) Most attractive display spot in Heaney's shop is this glass enclosed pegboard. Merchandise is frequently changed here.



Large Stock Essential in Public Course Operation

George Heaney, Pasadena Pro, Is An Advocate of Not Only Giving The Golfer What He Wants But Having It on Hand for Him

By **CHUCK CURTIS**

A golfer is no more likely to walk into a shop which has only one set of clubs on display and buy that set than he is to walk into a men's store which shows just one suit of clothes and buy that suit."

That's the philosophy of George Heaney, highly successful golf pro and merchandiser at the Pasadena, (Calif.) Municipal courses at Brookside Park, adjacent to the Rose Bowl.

Heaney has been at Pasadena since January, 1943. Two full 18-hole courses, a driving range and two putting greens are available to the public. At the present time, according to golf equipment salesmen serving the thriving golf area, the Pasadena golf shop sells more merchandise than any other pro shop in Southern California.

The outstanding feature of his shop, small and crowded though it is, is the large stock of golf clubs.

"If you have heavy traffic in a shop, then you must have a good stock," Heaney says. "Golfers are no different than

other shoppers — they want to feel the merchandise." In the case of golf clubs, Heaney believes, players want to feel the weight of the clubhead, the stiffness of the shaft, the grip, before they purchase.

Fads Are Important

There are fads in swing weights, Heaney thinks, and he's ready to cater to the public whims. A noted pro, Mangrum, may be quoted as favoring a certain swing weight and immediately there comes a public trend which can be as changeable as next week's tournament winner. George always wants to be ready for the new demand.

Always on display in the Pasadena shop are approximately 20 sets of woods and irons. In addition, several hundred used clubs are shown at all times, both in sets and singly.

More than 100 complete sets (woods and irons) of the top grade lines are kept in the stockroom.

Avoids Special Orders

Heaney tries to avoid special orders — "they make enemies" — in seeking to have a full range of club weights on hand.

"Pro golf shops are in definite compe-



Pasadena Municipal pro shop has contrived overcrowded look because George Heaney wants players to think it's impossible for them to ask for a golf item that he can't supply. (Right) Assistants Joe Rooney (1) and Chuck Heaney talk shoes in a leisure moment. This alcove is a converted breezeway.

tion with the sporting goods stores and department stores." George says. With the improvement in the pros' credit ratings they can buy better, in all grades. One of the places where we in the public course business can compete is in buying closeouts from manufacturers at reduced prices, and pass that savings on to the golfers.

"You have to be a buyer in order to sell.

"The most important thing is figuring, accurately, what an item will sell for. You can't buy an item just because you can get it cheap. What can you sell it for?

Uses Shopping Guide

Heaney is alert to new ideas in merchandising. Two years ago he sent out 200 GOLFDOM Christmas shopping guides to a few members of the players' clubs. They met with excellent response, so for Christmas of 1957 he mailed 600 copies.

Heaney has "shopped" the stores and one observation he has used successfully is in pricing.

An item at \$1.95 will sell many times better than one priced at \$2.05 or \$2.10. Certain price figures, such as \$1.10, \$1.20, \$1.50, seem to repel buyers.

Basically, the 5-cent sign seems to have appeal. Thus all of his golf clubs, sets and singles, carry a price tag of so many dollars plus 95 cents.

Heaney feels he is one of the first golf pros in his area to employ the 95-cent pricing system, something now widely used.

Heaney employs three fulltime male

assistants plus one woman sales clerk. Another assistant, an instructor, opens the shop twice a week.

The work schedule calls for two assistants to be on hand at all hours and Heaney, himself, is in the shop except when giving lessons. A woman bookkeeper, on a part time basis, keeps accounts which are checked by an auditor once a month.

Rings Up Everything

One important factor in his shop accounting procedure, Heaney says, was the purchase a few years ago of the best National Cash Register it was possible to buy and subsequently running every possible item through the register.

Heaney, who grew up in Chicago, where he caddied at Westmoreland, had been a pro at private clubs in Iowa before coming to California. In those days golfers felt it was inevitable they would pay higher prices for equipment and clothing at courses. Now that the golf pro is a competitive merchandiser, Heaney feels he is a real business rival of the sporting goods store and department store and golfers' attitudes have changed.

Part of this appeal is to the casual "drop in" who is playing the course for the first or second time. At Pasadena, Heaney reports, a surprising amount of merchandise is sold to golfers who just drop in to "look around" and see, at first glance, what they want.

Check Buyer's Service
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