

RECESSION! Golf Prospered In Spite of It 1959? Prospects Are Excellent

GOLF'S increased popularity in spite of the recession, the pros' reliance in, and stepped up profits from the wider handling of quality merchandise, and continued progress in turf research and management are cited by manufacturers as the most important developments in the game for 1958. As for 1959, the outlook is as rosy as it ever has been in any postwar year with the recession apparently having receded. The big problem, as the supplier executives see it, is to provide enough facilities for persons who want to play golf. Here are their comments:

Pro Quality Market Growing

This year the pros have made progress in establishing the reputation of the pro shop as the place to buy golf merchandise of top quality.

We have been more than pleased with the wide acceptance of the "pro-quality" association by the golfing public. We predict that 1959 will yield bigger profits to pros who emphasize the quality theme.

Orders for Christmas gifts and spring delivery of Maxfli balls, clubs, Tufhorse bags and Dunlop-Wright shoes give early confirmation to our forecast of a decided expansion of the pro quality market.

Vincent Richards, *vp*
Dunlop Tire & Rubber Co.

Pro Credit Is Good

The most certain indication of substantial progress in pro golf business is the improvement in pro credit. Pro character, the foundation of good credit, is first class. That is an essential for employment at good jobs. The merchandising elements of good credit depend on determining and supplying what the public wants. The pros should know better than anybody else what the public wants and needs in first class equipment.

I've noticed that pros who accent quality in their stocks and merchandise in a "quality" manner have had a very good year in 1958. I know that we have had one of our best years.

The junior programs conducted by the majority of professionals have raised and

strengthened the pros' status. Fathers and mothers are realizing what they owe golf pros for their great service to the youngsters and this appreciation has accounted for a good deal of buying.

Bill Kaiser, *Pro Sales Mgr.*
Hillerich & Bradsby Co.

Self-Reliance Paying

We and our pro customers have had one of the biggest years in MacGregor golf's history.

In analyzing the 1958 pro golf sales situation and studying it for trends, we notice that the professionals who have confidence in their ability to correctly survey their market and to serve it well have made substantial gains in sales volume. Despite increased costs in pro department operation, these men have operated profitably, according to our records and conversations.

There are no tricks or easy ways in selling the better part of the golf market. The self-reliant pro, who is a competent businessman, can take care of himself and his customers regardless of competition. He has an inside on the quality part of the golf market. It is getting more profitable each year for the man who knows how to take advantage of his position and that's something nobody else can do for him. Growth of the golf market and increasing awareness of the value of first grade equipment should make 1959 a great year for the self-reliant pro.

Henry P. Cowen, *pres.*
MacGregor Golf, Inc.

Courses Show Supts' Advance

Construction of new courses, reconstruction and modernizing of existing courses and high general standards of course condition this year show the benefits of the supt's study at the national and local conferences.

The educational sessions have paid off to some extent in the recognition of supts' abilities and in some increases in salaries but mainly in better courses, more efficiently operated.

Our sales have been higher, month by month, than they were last year. There is an increasing trend to view the expenditure of funds for course operation on a long-range basis and to buy to reduce yearly costs even if initial price seems high. In many cases, clubs need to make a realistic appraisal of their course maintenance requirements in size of staff and in machinery as they've been trying to operate on an outmoded basis.

Tom Mascaro, pres.
West Point Products Corp.

Stronger Trend To Pro-Only

This year there has been a conspicuous trend to pro-only golf merchandise which we have been able to observe and enjoy because of the response to the introduction of our pro-only steel center ball.

When the pro takes advantage of his unique merchandising position by energetic marketing of highest quality, exclusively pro golf goods he is certain to increase his percentage of the total golf market.

The pros' marketing position and the growth of the entire golf market are, to an appreciable degree, governed by the pros' foresighted work in the promotion of junior golf.

Jack Harkins, sales mgr.
Professional Golf Co. of America

Pro Is In Envidable Position

Golf is at an all-time popularity peak. If the weather had been right in all sections of U.S., and there had been adequate facilities throughout the country in 1958, the number of rounds played might have been doubled. This puts the pro in a most enviable position. If he is alive to players' and members' needs, he certainly is capitalizing on this great demand. Most pros are eminently capable. Members expect more from them than the average employer expects from his employees — and they get it! U.S. Rubber, through local



Th's cozy mantel and Gift Tee corner, at Chuck Tannis' Olympia Fields CC (Flossmoor, Ill.) pro shop is a favorite spot for golfers who are doing their Xmas shopping early.

reps, has tried to help the pros in getting newspaper, radio and TV publicity and has made important prize contributions to circuit and "home" tournament competitions. It plans even greater inducements through tournaments and other channels in 1959 to get the pro to play and promote the U.S. Royal.

John W. Sproul, sales mgr., golf ball div.

Cost Control is Golf Problem

As makers of equipment for keeping golf course mowers in efficient operating condition, our view of the golf market primarily is that of the playing facilities. It seems to us that the increased demand for high standards at courses means a constantly increasing pressure to boost course maintenance costs and all the ingenuity, vigilance and mechanized operation a supt. can use to keep costs under control.

Plastic pipe has been a big factor in extending watering to courses that previously weren't able to afford anything more than skeleton watering systems.

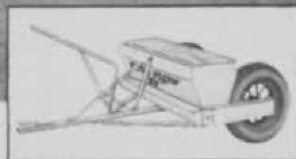
The heavy traffic of golfers, bag carts and golf cars presents problems that will increase along with budget worries.

Paul H. Root, vp
Fate-Root-Heath Co.

(Continued on page 100)



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Manufacturers Optimistic

(Continued from page 34)

Bigger Market, Bigger Problems

There isn't any way in which a golf professional or any other businessman can avoid competition. The pro who knows business sees that the golf market is getting bigger. He knows that the bigger the market, the more competition there is bound to be and the bigger chance there is of a greater profit.

I've noted this year that progressive professionals have expected competition for their players' business to get stronger. They have countered this by beating the competition to the punch.

In some places the pro himself cut prices in offsetting competition, but the pro didn't make the mistake of getting into cheap goods and sacrificing his market leadership.

The way in which pros generally solved their larger problems of a larger market in 1958, in my opinion, points to the fact that pros have learned how to make their competitive position even better in 1959.

James G. Hogg, pres.

Plymouth Golf Ball Sales Co.

Pro Merchandising Better

Progress of pros as merchants has been conspicuous this year. It has been reflected in pro volume, profits, increase of the golf market and the pro percentage of the market.

That this progress is soundly based is evident in the strong emphasis pros are putting on top quality merchandise and in the fact that run-of-mill golf stock is vanishing from the shops of successful pro businessmen.

We have noticed that a cycle of experiments with "just as good" golf merchandise has run its course. Pros who have maintained or improved their financial rating are those who have kept to well balanced stocks of top brand goods. Spalding sees in this 1958 demonstration of stable profit in golf merchandise of top quality logical promise of a fine year ahead for the pro businessmen and ourselves.

Edwin L. Parker, pres.

A. G. Spalding & Bros., Inc.

'59 To Be Fine In Pro Line

This year, despite a high unemployment ratio in some areas, our golf ball sales increased although there was not much of a

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rise in the sales of clubs, bags and other golf items. We believe that the lesson of this experience is that the nature of golf's appeal and value assures a basic market that can be greatly developed by aggressive marketing methods of alert and able professionals.

Forecasts of economists of brisk business activity in 1959 promise highly favorable conditions for the pro market. The pro has the inside track on the pro market and by exploiting his advantage should make next year a record one. Women's golf play has increased at a greater ratio than actual sales of clubs, balls, bags, etc. to women golfers. This fact points to a sales potential that I believe pros soon will convert into a big sales volume. We are expecting there will be such a pronounced extension of pros' merchandising efforts in 1959 that we are planning to spend more advertising our pro line than ever before in Wilson history.

*Fred J. Bowman, pres.
Wilson Sporting Goods Co.*

Buying Tougher; Selling Smarter

This year again sales have increased substantially in Hogan playing equipment,

Foot Joy and Hogan shoes and in the golf apparel lines for which we are sales agents to pro shops. A major reason for the increase is better buying by professionals. They don't spread their inventories thin and carry a little of many cheaper lines that pro shop customers can buy at other places and often at lower prices.

The pro now realizes that members, on whom he can count for business (especially in soft goods) and who establish styles and buying preferences, buy brands and products that have a reputation for top quality at a fair price. It has meant bigger volume and bigger profit for the pro to upgrade his sportswear. The pro who makes money operating like a businessman should, doesn't load up with a lot of stuff he buys mainly to cheer up a salesman and to get a stock that competes in low price with the downtown stores. He uses his capital to stock fast moving merchandise of known top quality. This policy obviously has proved profitable to many pros as our advance orders for the basic good sellers are four times greater now than they were in the fall of 1955.

*Ernie Sabayrac, pres.
Ernie Sabayrac, Inc.*

Courses Better Maintained

During the 1958 season, golf clubs generally have striven to a higher standard of maintenance. As far as playing conditions are concerned, clubs are very competitive — both private and public. Club members demand superior turf maintenance and fee courses are definitely dependent on good turf to retain the loyalty of their regular clientele and to attract new customers.

Educational conferences and the activities of supts' associations have increasingly influenced practices and standards of turf maintenance. Supts. are becoming better acquainted with results of research. New grasses, new chemicals, and new machinery are showing the way.

During 1958, courses have gone in for a great deal of reconstruction. On many courses, new greens were built, either to improve the architecture or generally to supply better turf. Tees have been enlarged or rebuilt to a large extent. Usually tees on older courses have been too small to provide adequate teeing space for today's heavy play. Enlargement and better grooming of tees are the order of the day.

Under forced draft, courses are using

more plant food. To establish fine turf and keep it that way requires steady feeding. Nothing has done more to improve golf courses than the adaption of a sustained feeding program. Superintendents have learned to evaluate the various types of fertilizers and to establish what is best for their particular soil and climate.

With the burgeoning growth of cities, many old, close-in courses are being squeezed by inflated expenses, especially taxes and demands for community improvements, streets and highways.

We need more courses but the prospect of reasonable operating costs, or a return on the investment in case of a fee course is dark. In spite of the 1957-1958 recession, the golf club business has been good during this season. This business is not subject to the ups and downs of the business cycle like other more sensitive lines. With the cycle pointing upward now, it does not necessarily follow that 1959 will be a good golf year. Like farming, the business is heavily dependent on the weather.

C. O. Borgmeier
George A. Davis, Inc.

Gary Player joins *First Flight*



Australian
Open
Champion

Gary Player, recent addition to the growing First Flight staff, set a new tournament record in winning the Australian Open with a record-breaking 271—seven strokes below the previous record.

Gary Player started using the First Flight ball because he heard tournament players talking about the outstanding advantages the Steel Power Center golf ball offered all golfers. When he played it in one tournament he told Bo Wininger that he would never be satisfied to play the old type ball again. We are pleased that he has joined Jimmy Demaret, Bo Wininger, J. C. Goosie, and many other leading players on a long-term contract with First Flight.

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