

I Don't Sell to Them— They Buy From Me

By JERRY GLYNN

Professional, Glen Flora CC, Waukegan, Ill.

THE art of successful selling at the private club pro shop consists of getting the members to feel like buying.

Members come out to the club to have fun. If the pro makes buying fun his sales go up and his members are happier.

I think a lot of us in pro golf defeat our purpose as merchants in being too obviously merchants. In reality we are equipment counselors.

We get our revenue from supplying a friendly, expert, convenient service rather than from being pressure salesmen.

The pro is a merchant only to the extent that merchandising is helpful to his members. When you hear a pro complain that his shop business isn't what he would like it to be, chances are his helpfulness isn't adequate or isn't recognized by members.

Most pros are reluctant to tell pupils on the lesson tee that their clubs aren't right for them. The pro himself outgrows clubs or, for some reason, finds getting a new set advisable. He regards the change as normal. Nevertheless, he may hesitate to suggest a change to his pupil because the latter may think the pro is trying to push new clubs on him merely to make a profit on the sale. The member hasn't been educated to the realization that the pro sells primarily for the good of his players.

One of the pro's big problems — the allowances on trade-in clubs — is, in a way, one of his opportunities. The pro, it is true, may have to make two sales in

order to take his profit. But he makes everybody happy by taking the trade-in clubs at an allowance which gives him a profit and gives the buyer of the trade-ins a good deal.

Pros sometimes are puzzled by their failure to get club business they think they should get from women. I believe I found the answer when I realized that

women regard themselves as very smart shoppers. Even though they don't know golf clubs, they think that any clubs that look like the real things, and which can be bought at supposedly bargain prices, represents smart shopping.

How to Compete

So what do I do? I make available for them good smaller sets at prices that compete with the so-called "wholesale" and "bargain" prices of retailers who are after my members' business. There is none of the fancy, juke-box look about the women's clubs I sell. When women buy clubs from me

they get a little educational explanation showing the parallel between the sort of a dress they want to wear and a \$9.95 copy. The same parallel applies to golf clubs and they are made to realize it.

Operating costs of pro departments are so high that I have to develop volume to get the profits necessary to keep me in sound condition and pay for the sort of assistants I want and need.

I've found that doing things that cost a little, but which run up the gross, give me the profit I have to have to stay in



Marriage is something I couldn't afford, either, but I did it.



AL BRAAK • GOLF PROFESSIONAL • WAKONDA CLUB • DES MOINES 15, IOWA

Al Braak, pro at the Wakonda Club, Des Moines, Ia., uses this letterhead as a forceful reminder to everyone of the kind of business he's in. An artist from the local Register & Tribune made the sketch. Braak originally intended to use it for Christmas sales promotion but liked it so well that he decided to put it on his letterheads. The drawing is an accurate reproduction of the area surrounding the Waukonda pro shop.

business. For instance: a set of woods bought at my shop goes to the buyer with a bonus set of headcovers. Incidentally, an interesting thing about this is that sales of headcovers have increased decidedly since I began the premium arrangement.

Golf Ball Test Plan

Something else I do that costs money, but eventually makes more for me, protects my market and educates my customers is a ball testing plan that I use. When a member makes all or most of his purchases from me, I occasionally give him a couple free balls. This is not only to show my appreciation for the business he gives me but helps educate the golfer who can't be dissuaded from playing cut-price balls.

I tell the good customer to play these balls a couple of rounds, then give them back and tell me what he has observed about their distance, putting qualities, cover toughness, sound, paint, get-away from the clubhead and feel when hit.

The balls are either those I sometimes get for personal use or some out of stock that I pay for.

Pro Is Educated

What started out to be a sales promotion and market insurance idea a few years ago has developed into something that has educated me, as well as my members. The reports on the gratis balls are very informative and give me some surprising and effective sales-making information that is passed around among members and their guests. I particularly direct it toward

players who use cut-price balls.

The result is that my members probably know golf balls better, by far, than the average golfer and my ball sales have increased.

I know that in helping members learn to be smart golf equipment shoppers they've done more buying from me than I have done selling to them.

Watrous Again Defends Title in Quarter Century Tourney

Al Watrous of Birmingham, Mich., will be going after his third straight title when the PGA Quarter Century club championship is held at Dunedin, Feb. 11-12. The tournament is restricted to PGA members of 25 years standing. A Senior-Junior four ball best ball event will precede the 36-hole championship. Total prize money is \$5,000, of which \$3,500 is being offered in the Quarter Century event. First Flight Co., formerly Professional Golf Co. of America is co-sponsor of the tournament with the PGA. About 100 oldtimers are expected to participate, according to John R. Inglis, Quarter Century club chmn.

Spry President of SCGA

Southern California Golf Assn. recently elected the following officers for 1959: Donald W. Spry, pres.; Edward K. Zuckerman, vp; Thomas G. McMahon, secy.; and Julie Bescos, treas.