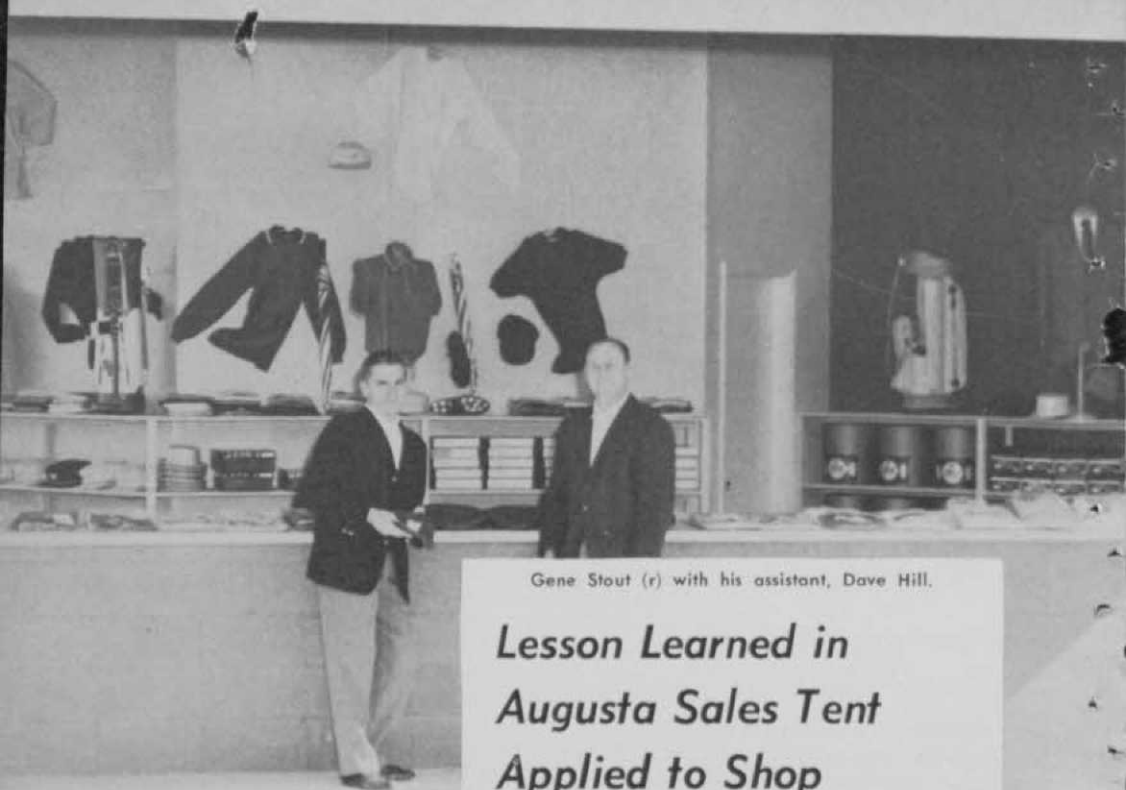


GENE STOUT'S GOLF SHOP



Gene Stout (r) with his assistant, Dave Hill.

Lesson Learned in Augusta Sales Tent Applied to Shop

By **JOHN HENDRIX**

Augusta, Ga., Chronicle

GENE STOUT, now in his third year as professional at Augusta National, doesn't believe in the adage that old dogs can't learn new tricks.

Stout is afforded a unique merchandising opportunity at the National. During all but one week of the six months the club is open, his clientele consists only of the exclusive membership and their guests. During the other week he serves thousands of

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customers who annually visit the course for the Masters tournament.

"My customers for that week, of course, have varied tastes and interest — much more so than members of the club," he says. "But, I find that attractive displays of merchandise seems to have a universal appeal.

"One thing I learned in 1959, for example, brought me an increase of almost 100 percent in pro shop sales to my members during the first two months the club was open this year."

Stout's member shop is closed to the visitors. His merchandise for sale to the Masters tournament visitors has in the past been housed in a tent adjacent to the member shop, but this year it will be in a new permanent building on the grounds.

Display Departmentalized

During the first two years he operated this outdoor shop, the merchandise display was little more than a jumble of clubs, clothes, shoes and hats. Last year, he departmentalized the displays and the results were so good that he did the same in the member shop this year.

"I'm a firm believer in using as little glass as possible," says Stout. "I like to have merchandise out of display cases and the only thing I display under glass is my golf balls."

Departmentalizing of the merchandise, he found, also was an aid to his employees. For this reason, the new outdoor shop was designed in a circle with display racks behind the counter.

"Since the building is of circular design," Stout added, "it is not only easier to attractively display more merchandise, but it also means that we'll be able to serve more people with greater speed."

The primary reason for departmentalizing the merchandise in the outside shop and thus leading to the change in the member pro shop, came about because during the tournament there was greater demand for soft goods than for clubs.

"Having been here several years as an assistant to Ed Dudley, I realized that although tournament visitors are here for only one week, we have many customers who come back from year to year.

"A customer who is serviced quickly, of course, is a more satisfied customer and it was for this reason that the change in the display was made originally. It has paid off in sales in my member shop and I feel certain that it will be even more of a success in the new building for my once-a-year customers."