

## One Dark Cloud on Otherwise Cheerful Horizon

Manufacturers who responded to Golfdom's queries concerning playing equipment and accessory sales, pointed to another record year as the golf market continued to boom. But one executive of a large distributing firm painted some gloom over the encouraging picture, at least so far as the pro is concerned, by suggesting that sporting goods and other outside merchants are making serious inroads into his business. Here is what the manufacturers had to say:

### Golf's Growth Continues with Tougher Competition for Pros

*By W. D. Schaffner*

Pres., National PGA Distributors

Every post war year has brought an acceleration of golfing interest and player purchases of equipment. This gives assurance that the years to follow will, in turn, bring new highs. Credit for this upsurge goes largely to the home professional whose "grass roots" encouragement to millions of beginners has attracted their regular participation.

This effort has been helped immeasurably by The National Golf Foundation, financed by many suppliers, which has encouraged and aided the establishment of hundreds of new courses. Something new and gigantic has come into being. Perhaps the most significant development of 1960 is the proved popularity of televised golf. Still in its infancy, this type of programming will expand rapidly to influence and popularize golf even more.

It appears that 1961 will top all past years. It is difficult to focus attention on any matters of unusual significance insofar as the industry itself is concerned. Every individual golf professional should diligently analyze his particular situation. He may be less secure than careless thought could lead him to believe. Growth carries no automatic guarantee the professional will equitably share the harvest. The gain in golf has gathered an army of commercial followers.

Over 10,000 sporting goods stores now compete. This figure does not include additional thousands of department, hardware, drug, grocery, gasoline, variety, auto, sundry and other establishments which have entered the golf field. Many of these are using a tool not readily available to the professional — advertising. Much of it is phony, exaggerated or even false. Some of these come-ons appear illegal, and the government has promised to investigate. But relief will be slow to come. Meanwhile, the professionals will continue to lose sales. Although the exact information is not published, available data indicates to many observers that there are now more clubs sold outside pro shops than within. This trend seems to have started at least three or four years ago.

The home professional who genuinely desires his personal economic growth to keep pace with that of the industry must make full use of his natural advantage and talent. One method is to use his prestige constructively and combine it with the equipment he sells and the methods he employs to sell. This includes offering merchandise which is available only to pro shops and providing careful instructions concerning each article's proper use. Coupled with an ability to make sensible trades, this is his greatest competitive advantage, and should be fully exploited.

It is certainly true that the game cannot grow without the services only a professional can provide. More job opportunities are offered as a result of the increased number of courses. But the quality of these opportunities cannot improve unless the full merchandise potential of each can be captured and held.

### Scored Better on Courses and in Pro Shop Sales in 1960

*By Edward G. Dowling*

Vp, Marketing, A. G. Spalding & Bros., Inc.

The contribution that fine equipment makes to the game and business never was more obvious than in 1960. In performances and sales of Spalding woods, irons and balls our pro staff consultants and pro customers have recorded better figures than ever before.

Every year we have built our equipment to more precise standards. Our investments in research and development personnel and facilities have resulted in startling innovations and improvements. The Spalding Distance Dot, a new concept

of golf ball, brought many thousands of customers into pro shops and kept them as repeat buyers. Spalding's new Executive woods already are showing that they are going to be a big factor in pro shop sales increases in 1961.

In spite of some of the very conservative business forecasts we have seen in the financial papers, we are extremely enthusiastic about the prospects for the coming year. Spalding confidently looks to 1961 as the greatest year yet for fine golf equipment.

## Top Quality Market — Pros' Part — Growing Fastest

By Robert D. Rickey

Vp, The MacGregor Company

Interest in golf literally exploded in 1960, creating the greatest market for top quality equipment that our industry has known. In the case of MacGregor, we were overwhelmed by the demand in spite of greatly increased manufacturing facilities.

In addition to this tremendous growth, golfers of the '60s are very selective and intelligent buyers who demand not only quality, but equipment that will satisfy their individual needs as recommended by the professional. Consequently, we are offering a more diversified line of clubs which feature four distinctly different shaft feels, a choice of two grips, etc.

"Eye appeal" has become an extremely important factor. Today a golf club must not only play good . . . it must also look good.

The prestige of owning fine equipment has become a factor that manufacturers can't overlook. For example, we sold a record number of Kangaroo bags which retailed at \$125 and up.

It is our belief that the prospects have never been greater for the sale of top line merchandise. With the many advancements in club, bag and accessory design, the outlook for '61 is brighter than ever before. Professionals have the opportunity to convince people that they owe it to themselves to use only the finest.

The outstanding features that we've introduced in our 1961 professional golf line makes obsolete every piece of equipment in rack rooms throughout the country. We are prepared for this tremendously increased market and feel that the professional, in turn, will be quick to capitalize on the demand for quality merchandise, which is exclusively his.

## Recognition of Pro Service Helps Boost Sales

By H. W. Colburn

Vp, Wilson Sporting Goods Co.

Increased participation in golf in 1960 has been most encouraging. Despite inclement weather in most of the country in April and May, sale of equipment by pros was comparatively good. The greatest increase in golfers and play has been at the public and semi-public courses so, naturally, the professionals at pay-as-you-play locations have had a large increase in club and ball sales. This follows the trend established at the private clubs.

Well operated clubs and courses have increased recognition and appreciation of the value of competent professional service. This has resulted in the construction of many fine pro shops at private and public courses where the golfer can get expert buying aid and has the convenience of large stocks. This has been particularly true of apparel and has identified the professional as a merchant who can compete in price and quality.

The professional's progress in the growing golf business also has been marked by his effective activity in Christmas golf gift sales promotion and other special events. The successful professional obviously has learned that the volume of sales and profit is in direct ratio to well timed, accurately directed advertising and sales efforts.

Our observations point to further sound growth of golf in 1961 and we have set up our production schedule accordingly.

## Dunlop Sales Set Record, New Plant for 1961

By Paul W. Gibbs

Sales Mgr., Sports Div., Dunlop Tire & Rubber Corp.

More Dunlop golf equipment has been sold in pro shops in 1960 than in any previous year. Our studies with the professional point to continuance of the upward sales curve.

The new pro-only, Dunlop Super Maxfli has received a better reception from players and professionals who supply them than any other ball we have made. Now that we have the new Dunlop Maxfli clubs we are certain to have, in 1961, a substantial increase over Dunlop's highly satisfactory sales figures for this year.

On October 18 we will dedicate the  
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## As Manufacturers See It

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new Dunlop sports plant in Westminster, S. C. This most completely modern of all golf goods manufacturing establishments is evidence of our confidence in the bright prospects for pro golf business in 1961 and succeeding years.

## Everybody Is Busy Making, Selling Good Equipment

By *Kenneth Smith*

Kenneth Smith Golf Clubs

The most significant thing about 1960 golf business is that everybody that is making very good clubs has been so busy. I understand that the sale of golf shafts has been away ahead of the record breaking number sold in 1959. Thus the industry as a whole is healthy and certainly, in view of the strong demand for quality clubs, the cut price demand hasn't bothered the good pro shops.

Barring wholly unexpected adverse market developments, 1961 will be better, decidedly, than this year in golf business. The theme of successful professional operations no seems to assure continued steady growth of superior quality golf merchandise despite the amount of cheap goods coming onto the market.

## Quality Lines Show Largest Pro Sales Increase

By *Ernie Sabayrac*

Pres., Ernie Sabayrac, Inc.

Sales to golfers this year have again proved there is more money for the pro in top quality lines than in merchandise that is subject to severe cut-price competition.

Our 1960 sales thus far show an increase of 26 per cent in Foot-Joy and Ben Hogan shoes, Izod men's sportswear, Haymaker women's sportswear, Flip-It headware, Palm Beach slacks and sports coats and Coberknit rain jackets. The sales increase in Ben Hogan clubs, balls and accessories is 38 per cent ahead of 1959.

Investments made by professionals and clubs in the visual display equipment we handle for Henry Leopold have brought substantial and immediate dividends. Another significant aspect of the year's business has been the excellent credit rating of the professionals who identify themselves with the best merchandise. The cheap market is cut up in a hundred ways

and a pro is out of luck trying to undercut a store that can feature "loss leaders."

With a superior set of irons costing \$150 and a set of woods of the same grade costing \$100, the pro's captive market isn't going to go on buying sprees. However, a high quality golf shirt costing \$10 is bringing money freely out of pockets and giving the customer a value that makes the buy a bargain.

We expect the golf business to show another substantial increase in 1961 primarily because more pros are getting to be better businessmen.

## Pros Resist Import Bargains and Increase Quality Sales

By *John W. Sproul*

Sales Mgr., Golf Ball Sales  
U. S. Rubber Co.

Final statistics aren't yet available, but indications are that play in 1960 increased more than 10 per cent and overall sales of golf balls through pro shops for the first seven months of the year were up approximately 11 per cent over 1959. Actually, the increase for the very top-price ball was 10.8 per cent, almost identical with the overall increase. This indicates that the professional's sales of top quality equipment of all descriptions are keeping pace with the market in general.

It has been our observation that very few pro merchandisers have fallen for the "imported bargains" offered them. Quality and satisfied customers, and not price, continue to be of paramount interest to them.

The above facts augur well for 1961. With the pro accounting for 78 per cent of sales of top quality balls this year, and considering that he continues to be quality and customer-service conscious, the manufacturer can proceed with confidence in continuing to try to improve his products. With this assurance, U. S. Rubber will go on emphasizing quality in its advertising, promotion and selling in the coming year.

## Sales Training Pays Profits to Pros in 1960

By *Bill Kaiser*

Hillerich & Bradshy Co.

This year has brought impressive proof that professionals have learned to capitalize on their expert status in the selection and fitting of playing equipment. The pro shop's inviting appearance reflects the

high standing of the man who operates the shop and induces and helps the customer to buy.

The majority of professionals are hiring assistants who have sound training, fine characters, pleasant personalities, initiative and willingness to work. The PGA business schools at Dunedin and in Los Angeles have been of immeasurable value in training the type of young men golf needs in its business. They have done a great deal toward helping the pros who employ them give clubs the standard and scope of service that the good professional wants to give.

Among other major reasons for 1960 being a very good year is the improved design of woods and irons and better playability. This improvement will accelerate sales next year.

The iron blades have adequate hitting surface for the average player as well as the expert. The shaft flexes make possible precise fitting for all types of men, women and Juniors. Without doubt the uniformity of grip construction, now evident in leading manufacturers' top equipment, has increased the usefulness and value of clubs. The woods are designed to get the ball up and give the average player help in solving that problem from the tee or fairway lies.

## Skimping on Course Outdated

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tight and club payments aren't setting any new speed records.

### Budgets Are Tight

John Gibbs, Goldthwaites of Texas — Volume of equipment and supply sales has been healthy and stable but profit margins aren't keeping pace so free services are being discontinued. Budgets are tight with clubhouses and other facilities getting first cut at the club revenue. Green Chmn. and officers of clubs are urging supts. to patch up old equipment. Play has increased considerably at private and public courses. With heavier traffic, less maintenance and strong demands for perfect playing conditions, veteran supts. are doing their best and hoping for miracles. New automatic watering systems, lease or lease-purchase programs for new equipment and newer strains of grass may work some of the needed wonders. Course-homesite developments continue to increase and give golfers of moderate income opportunities to enjoy private club atmosphere. Quite a few of these projects are building poor courses due to bad

financial planning. These courses will require extensive rebuilding. Prospects for equipment, supply and material business for 1961 look very good. Money seems to be available from a number of sources for financing new courses.

Don Quick, Jack Dayton and Son, Louisville — This year we have worked harder to get our share of the business and it has increased satisfactorily. Volume of play in this area is up 15 to 20 per cent over 1959. Budgets always are too small but that gives us room for increasing sales as the constantly increasing number of golfers are constantly demanding improvement in playing conditions that in most cases are very good. The larger clubs have been paying promptly.

### Tiffine 328 Improves Play

Reg Perry, Turtaid, Inc., Memphis — Eight new courses have opened for play in this area this year and three more are under construction. One club being built has two 18-hole courses. Volume of play has increased from about 25 to 30 per cent. Collections have been about as usual. The homesite operation, we believe, is due to become more popular, especially in larger cities. Introduction of Tiffine 328 Bermuda in Southern greens has meant new and different maintenance methods and improved playing conditions that will help account for greater play, better maintenance methods and more golf business in 1961.

George Cornell, G. L. Cornell Co., Bethesda, Md. — Weather conditions and turf have been good in this area. Maintenance budgets were about same as last year with adjustments for increased labor costs. Play increased greatly and continues to increase. This means that getting work done quickly is an important problem and directs attention of supt. and chmn. to the urgent necessity of equipment that will give results fast and economically. Course-homesite projects that are properly financed are bound to succeed in this district.

Byron Reed, E. Baltz & Son, Portland, Ore. — Golf course business here is much better than last year. Turf conditions are better. More fairway fertilizing than ever before. Supts. assns. in Oregon have been invaluable to golfers, their clubs and to the supts. themselves. There has been wider hiring of good architects for new courses. Budgets are increasing for new method machines, replacement of worn and obsolete equipment and fertilization. Payment of bills is very good. We are watching with interest two course-home-