

Advice from Champaign

Make Them Think of You When They Think About Golf

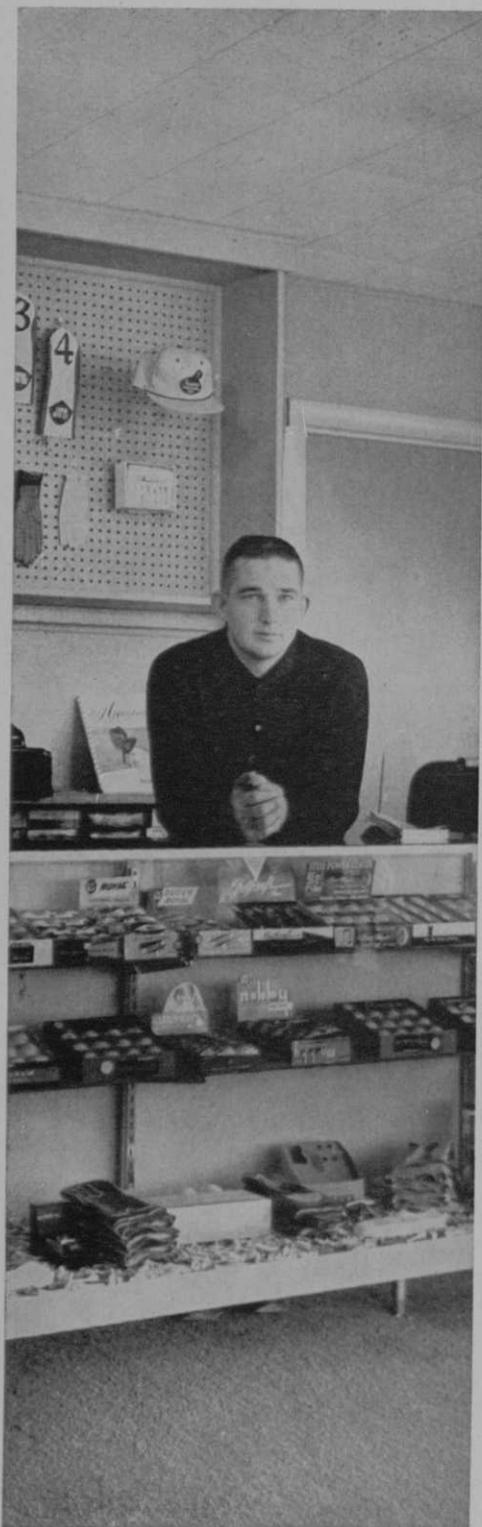
Bob Hamrich, who is installed in a brand new shop at the Champaign (Ill.) CC, has a simple enough philosophy for developing business. It comes down to: Do a good teaching job and it creates practically all the volume a pro can handle. On Saturdays and Sundays and on other days when play is heaviest, act as the starter so that all your members can see and talk to you.

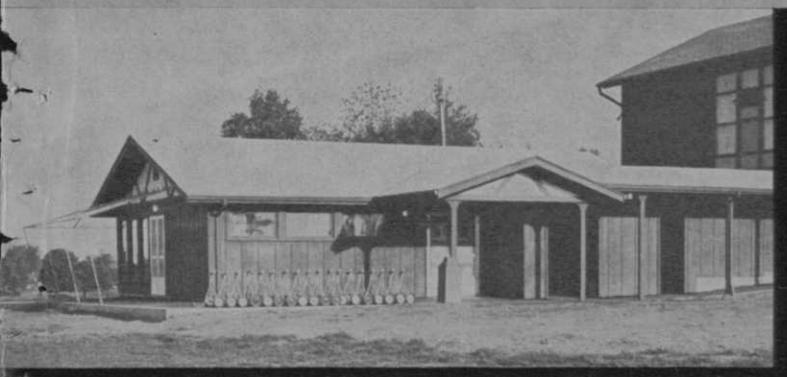
There is nothing revolutionary about this, Bob opines. Successful pros have been doing it for almost as long as golf has been played; those who aren't so successful probably aren't seen enough by the membership. "There is nothing," says Hamrich, "like being omnipresent so that when your players think of golf, regardless of where they are, they think of you along with it. This kind of close association makes them completely dependent on you not only for solution of their playing problems but for their merchandise needs. You have," Bob sums it up, "established yourself as Mr. Golf in their eyes."

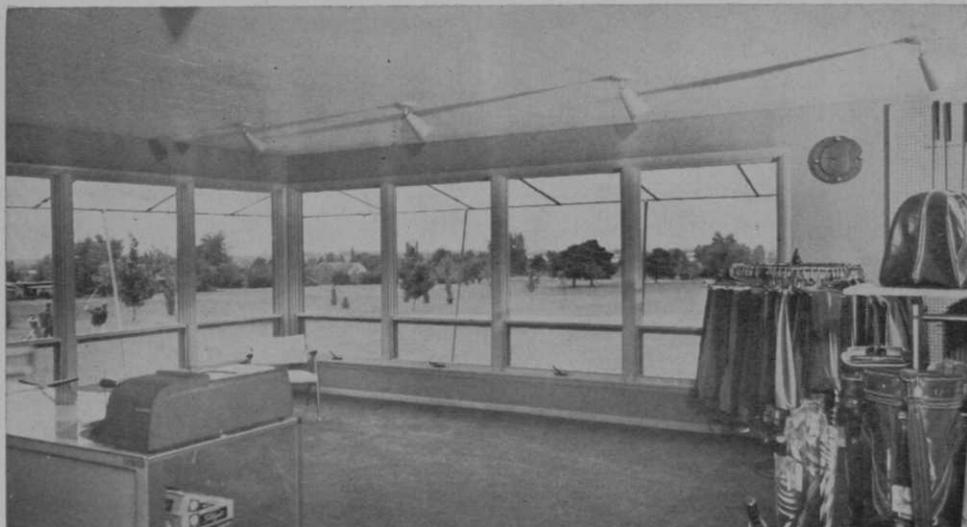
Doesn't Hurt Business

Do you think that hurts business? Not in the estimation of Hamrich who is in his third season at Champaign and has seen volume increase quite perceptibly in each of the years he has been there. His new place, which he occupied for the first time in March, should insure that his sales continue to move steadily upward, but 80 to 90 hour-a-week workman that he is, Bob will go right on placing more dependence in the close, personal service that he gives than in anything else. One reason for this, he points out,

Exterior and interior views of bright and airy pro shop at Champaign CC are seen on page 25. Shop is easily accessible from first tee, lockerrooms and clubhouse. Pro Bob Hamrick is seen at left.







At least five fairways can be seen from interior of Champaign shop.

is that as rewarding as business has been at Champaign, he still hasn't come close to realizing what he feels is true potential in sales to his 95 women players. Scratching his head, Bob says: "That is one of the secrets that I haven't yet unlocked. My women players take a fair share of lessons and, in general, they are pretty good customers when it comes to playing equipment. But otherwise their buying is a little spotty. However, my books show that they are buying more sports garb now than they did in 1958."

In the next breath, the Champaign shopmaster adds that he is quite happy that his male players, who outnumber the women two to one, are, all in all, loyal customers. "They provide the bulk of the business here," he says.

Lead In From Several Directions

The new Champaign shop is ideally laid out for merchandising. The sales room, covering about 600 sq. ft., is carpeted in red, is completely walled in a stained golden wheat pegboard, has an acoustical ceiling and there are swivel lamps aloft that can be swung around to give direct lighting on practically every display in the shop. Adjacent to the rear end of the room is a fitting room with three full-length mirrors. Hamrich's storage section is equipped with steel stand-up racks that have a capacity of 300 bags and the cleaning and repair area is located in an L shaped compartment opposite the racks. Just beyond the club service dept. is an enclosed garage in which 18 golf

cars are stored. There are two doors leading into the sales room, one from a covered walkway leading to the lockerrooms and the other, facing the first tee.

Although Hamrich, who learned his golf and merchandising at Ohio State University, handles all the teaching assignments and tries to be "a man about the shop," as mentioned before, that doesn't mean he tries to go it alone. He has two assistant pros — Tom Tatnall, who oversees operation of the shop, and Larry Walters, who doubles as an inside salesman and is in charge of the car fleet. Mike Myers is responsible for the club cleaning and repairing and storage service. Sheryl Fiester, an Illinois University student, is bookkeeper and also is trying to do something about Hamrich's women sales dilemma.

The bookkeeping system at the Champaign shop was originally set up by an outside accountant who regularly audits the records, draws up the balance sheets and profit and loss statements and advises Hamrich on tax matters. Billing is handled by the club and Hamrich does the bulk of re-ordering and buying.

Makes It on Lesson Tee

Since he broke in as an assistant pro 12 years ago at Lakewood CC in Cleveland, Ohio, Bob Hamrich has appreciated the value of the lesson tee for getting close to the membership he serves. In successive jobs in Olmsted Falls and Fremont, both in Ohio, and more recently at Champaign, he never has gotten out of the no-

(Continued on page 80)

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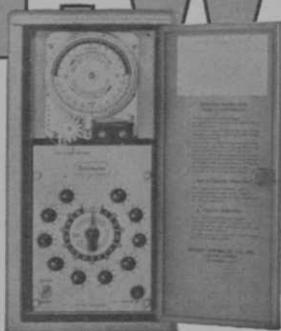
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Make Them Think of You

(Continued from page 34)

tion that this is the place to cultivate customers. "I can truthfully say," Hamrich observes, "that I have sold a good deal more on the outside than I have on the inside." His teaching activity includes numerous clinics and free group sessions for kids, 10 and under (in May), 11 to 15-year olds (12 hours in both June and July) and regular group lessons for women early in the season. Out of these come a summer that is heavily scheduled with paid lesson giving. Bob's fee for six one-half hour lessons is \$23, with this charge including range balls.

Member's Endorsement Important

Asked whether a pro is in position to advertise to any great extent inside or outside the shop, or push sales in what might amount to a pressure play, Hamrich has this to say: "I never have been too strong on subjecting members to pressure selling because of the limitations imposed on the pro. I feel that your energies have to be directed toward winning as many friends as you can among the membership. Time and again, I have seen how the members have helped to make a success of my pro operation. There is nothing in this business that carries the strong recommendation that a member's endorsement does."

Hamrich, incidentally, has a note of commendation for the club mgr. at Champaign. John Chalet. "You would think," says Bob, with a grin, "that John had a stockholder's interest in our place of business. He never misses a chance to put in a plug for us. Coming as it does from the front office, I'm sure that it carries a lot of weight with our players."

It's thus apparent that Bob Hamrich has strong forces working for him from both sides of the fence at Champaign CC. That is a pretty good indication of how thoroughly he has everyone believing that he is Mr. Golf.

USGA Green Section Fees

Annual fees for the visiting service of the USGA green section are: Less than 18 holes, \$100; 18 to 27 holes, \$125; 36 holes, \$150; per regulation course in addition to 36 holes, \$40 extra. Fees include traveling expenses of the visiting agronomist for one regularly scheduled visit and one other visit if requested.