



Harold S. Cross

Check the Bag Racks To Make Sales Up Front

By **HAROLD S. CROSS**

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Study of what's in his golf bag racks is important to the private club professional. It will show him what his members need. What the members need obviously is what the professional has to buy and sell.

Study of the racks reduces expensive guessing that can't be entirely avoided in pro merchandising.

The professional at the public and semi-private course also can make a study of players' bags and what's in them but it's more advantageous for him to make

the study at the first tee instead of in the rack room.

When the pro makes such studies he is making a marketing survey. Every retailing establishment would like to make such a survey as conveniently and accurately as the golf professional can.

It is comparatively an easy project for the professional to take a complete inventory of his member's bags, clubs and balls and accessories in the bags, recording their age and condition. In addition to the value of such an inventory as a buying and marketing aid, the duplicate of the inventory, kept some place other than in the pro shop or clubhouse, may be worth considerable money to the pro and members if and when insurance

claims have to be settled.

List of Needs Comes In Handy

A written inventory of members' playing equipment usually surprises the professional by disclosing how much his players may need. Christmas, birthday and other gift occasions offer many merchandising service opportunities to professionals in supplying these needs.

An inventory made toward the end of the summer supplies useful buying guidance for the next year. Definite figures on requirements are worth far more than impressions, hunches or even past experience. Exact figures are particularly valuable when something such as the women's golf market is developing rapidly and should be kept under close watch by the professional.

Survey Form Available

The trouble with the market survey is that it is detail added to an already burdensome amount of paperwork being done by men who are not always temperamentally suited to this kind of labor. However, the survey job is simplified by a form that GOLFDOM made up some years ago and which may be obtained from the National Golf Foundation, 804 Merchandise Mart, Chicago 54, Ill.

It has been my observation that the time spent on a market study in the rack room leads to results that make it about the best paid project a professional and an assistant can undertake. To check my opinions on the market study with the experiences of successful pro businessmen, I consulted several Spalding staff members who are outstanding club professionals as well as playing stars.

Lesson Tee Shows Needs

Jerry Barber, pro at Wilshire CC in Los Angeles and PGA champion, says that when he went into the Wilshire job he went through the rack room very thoroughly and saw what the players needed. Some experimental tries at selling members whose equipment needed replacing did not yield results that were satisfactory. Following that venture, Barber began accenting the lesson tee approach to club sales. He says:

"I know that if a fellow had or took the time to follow up sales leads from the rack room he would do some business, but in our case we found that we could sell much more equipment from the lesson tee and do a better job this way." Barber, incidentally, is a marvel when it comes to fitting clubs.

Annual PGA Meeting Scheduled for Nov. 2-10 in Florida

Forty-fifth annual meeting of the PGA will be held Nov. 2-10 at the Diplomat East Hotel, Hollywood-by-the-Sea, Fla. Henry C. Poe, former vp and pro at Reading (Pa.) CC will be general chmn. of the meeting. The executive, tournament and manufacturers relations committees will hold their business sessions between the 2nd and 6th and the education and teaching programs are scheduled for the 7th, according to Don E. Fischesser, who is in charge of these activities. Tommy Armour will conduct a teaching clinic during the latter session. On the evening of the 7th, the president's dinner, marked by the presentation of Hall of Fame, Player-of-the-Year and Club Professional-of-the-Year awards, will be held. The last three days of the conference will be largely devoted to various meetings of delegates.

Jerry adds: "Every club has some members who want new equipment every year. Then there are many members who begin looking at new equipment after several poor games in a row. However, most golf equipment is sold through good display along with alert sales people in the shop who suggest that a player might try this or that.

"We've found that some equipment can be sold on rainy days when the member is just standing around waiting for the rain to stop or cheerfully loafing in the shop."

"What Should I Give?" Answered

Paul Runyan, professional at La Jolla (Calif.) CC and the PGA of America and international PGA Seniors' champion, sees in the rack inventory the possibility of a service that inevitably must produce sales. Runyan remarks:

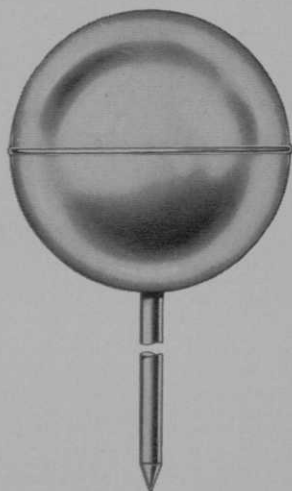
"A record of the needs of the potential customers is of timely usefulness when a husband, wife or business associate wants to give a golf gift and doesn't know what is needed.

"I see the advantage of knowing the right answer as to golf needs illustrated by my friend, Jim Fogarty, at the Oakmont CC, Glendale, Calif. He is a wonderful detail man and really a genius at making use of his knowledge of what's

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Check The Bag Racks

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in the bags at Oakmont. He knows at almost any time the needs of any member. The result is that Jim has endeared himself to his members with informed buying help."

Information Is Smith's Selling Basis

Horton Smith is one of the best businessmen in golf. The nearest approach to a "selling formula" that Horton has is that what is good for the club member is good for Smith. This may be promoted by Horton's Detroit environment. It is on this basis that he studies the clubs his members have in their bags.

Horton is very much against high pressure selling. He is decidedly for getting every possible bit of information that will enable him and his staff to serve the members with what they need although they may not realize their needs, and must be subtly made aware of what will increase their enjoyment of golf.

He says that the clubs in the bag and the bag itself tell a story that helps the pro in his buying and selling. Wisely purchased shop stock is partially sold

the instant it is put on display, according to Smith. That is the experience of every successful merchant in every line.

Horton has used the Golf Foundation forms for inventorying bags and contents and has added to that information shoe, shirt, head and waist sizes, birthdays, anniversaries and miscellaneous data that increases service to the members.

Psychological Element

From this information, Smith works into the psychological elements. Eye appeal, advertising, habits and feel are considered as well as mechanical specifications. Horton balances his buying so that no part of his potential market is neglected. Beginners, Juniors, Seniors, left-handers, all players, in fact, are evaluated in specific terms as Smith outlines his market picture against the background of what's in the bag rack.

It is a helpful but not strictly an accurate market survey that Horton makes, for he says "While I consider the potential need or the likely desire of the member, there always is something new and eye-catching that may strike the member's fancy stronger than any plan-

ned presentation of merchandise in the shop."

Ogden Learns and Lists Needs

Bill Ogden, professional at North Shore CC, Glen View, Ill., and several times winner of Illinois championships, is such a capable golf merchant that his members regard his shop as one of the real assets of club membership.

Ogden makes a check on his members' equipment needs each fall when his staff refinishes each club in the rack room.

He has this to say: "During the fall we record what our members need. A man or woman may need a new bag, new woods or irons, headcovers, a glove or something else. With this record we can, if asked, make definite suggestions around Christmas and at any other gift time. The fall inspection and listing of needs also informs us who probably will be our likeliest potential customers the following spring.

Study Resort Market

"I feel that professionals in the Midwest and East have an edge in ordering merchandise for their members by finding out what is selling well at winter resort clubs. For instance, last winter I visited

southern California and Arizona resorts to see what was 'hot.' I ordered accordingly.

"The professional has to bring new products to the attention of his members without having them feel that the pro is pushing his merchandise. The shop must be first rate. The pro and his assistant must use up-to-date equipment. How can a professional and his assistant expect to sell new bags and clubs when they are using old stuff themselves?"

Uses Postcards

"The professional should make every effort to see that the low handicap players in his club have the latest and best in equipment as these people set the examples for other members. I believe in sending postcards keeping my members well informed about the latest in golf equipment.

"On the basis of what the rack room inventory shows, the professional can channel his member to becoming aware of the new trends in golf equipment. Woods of increased loft, the displacement of the 2-iron by the 5-wood in many instances, pitching wedge instead of a 2-wood in some 14-club sets, and other

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expertly-advised choices of clubs (when changes from normal are helpful) make pro service definitely worth money to the member.

No Negligence in Car Suit

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car to a player who would drink three beers while playing nine holes; he should have provided paths on which the car could be driven; he should have given Simpson special instructions on how to drive the car; special instructions should have been posted in the car describing its operation. These arguments are scarcely deserving of our attention. Simpson was an experienced golfer who had used Corbett's cars on previous occasions; three beers did not affect his ability to drive the car safely; cars are intended for use on the fairways, not on paths. The golf car, a tricycle-like affair, is steady and stable with only an accelerator and a brake and it appears that any reasonably intelligent person can learn to operate it within a few minutes.

The court of appeal affirmed the judgment of the trial court thus denying the plaintiff any relief. (*Gillespie V. Chevy Chase Golf Club*, 9 Cal. Repr. 437.)

Western Golf Awards 126 New Evans Scholarships

A total of 126 new Chick Evans college scholarships, valued in excess of \$250,000, have been awarded by Western Golf Assn. The scholarship winners are from 83 clubs in 13 states. They join 317 returning upperclassmen to form a record number of 443 boys enrolled in college this fall through the Evans Scholars Foundation program sponsored by WGA.

This is the program which Chick Evans, veteran amateur golf star, initiated in 1930. Since that time 1,232 scholarships have been awarded. Each scholarship, covering full tuition and room rent, is renewable for four years and is valued in excess of \$2,000.

The operation of the nationwide Evans Scholars program is financed for the most part by the contributions of individual golfers — more than 36,000 this year.

Of the 126 new awards, 50 went to boys from Chicago-area clubs. There were 32 scholars selected in Mich., 15 in Wis., 11 in Minn., five in Ohio, three in Mo.; two each in Pa., Kan. and Colo., and one each in Ind., W. Va., Ore. and Wash. The majority of the new scholars live in Evans chapter houses permanently maintained at seven colleges.