



New, three story pro shop, one of the finest in the country, overlooks first tee at Congress Lake CC.



Congress Lake clubhouse as seen from the tenth tee. Club was founded in 1896, draws on four cities in north-central Ohio for its membership.

The 1987 Look? You'll Find It in the Pro Shop at Congress Lake

Not only have they built a dream house for Mr. Guysick — but his members go all out in making his operation profitable

Anyone who has seen Joe Guysick's pro shop at Congress Lake CC in Hartsville, Ohio, probably has come away with the impression that "this is the way things are going to look in 1987." The trim building in which the shop is housed was completed only a couple years ago and probably couldn't be duplicated for less than \$50,000. It is a three-story brick structure, 30 feet wide by 62 feet long, that literally has been landscaped into the course architecture. From the basement club service area, the player can walk onto the first tee; the second floor, with the exception of space set aside for Guysick's office, is completely given over to the display of merchandise; and the third floor is used for general storage.

From both an artistic and practical standpoint, a person would have to go a few thousand miles in any direction to find a shop that quite comes up to the one at Congress Lake. It's one of those places in which a visiting pro would first be impressed by the spaciousness of the surroundings and then be struck by how nicely everything is integrated in spite of all that floor space. Finally he would come away with the conviction that a fellow only dreams of doing business in such a shop.

For many of the 17 years that Joe Guysick has been at Congress Lake, he, too, dreamed of such a place. Formerly, his shop was nestled in a lower level corner of the clubhouse and its overall dimensions approximated what generally are expressed in storage room proportions. But even with that, business was good, Joe had faith, and the membership realizing that you can't handle something like 550



Shop interior, designed by Display Creations of Detroit, features an island display in the center of the sales room. Walls are finished in white leaded knotty pine.



golfers in a space where the walls seem to keep creeping inward, voted to appropriate funds for a new shop. When they got around to doing this, they certainly didn't allow thoughts of cutting any corners to enter their minds.

An old pro like Guysick, who has been in the golf business for 30 years and spends his winters working as a teaching associate at Sunset G&CC in St. Petersburg, probably would turn a profit in almost any kind of surroundings. But he finds it just a little more palatable to do so in his present comfortable atmosphere. For many years much of his revenue has been realized from three blind bogie tournaments that are played each week at Congress along with larger scale club events that are held bi-weekly.

Entry fees from these affairs finance the awarding of merchandise prizes and insure a regular turnover of playing equipment and apparel for the shop. Guysick and his staff handle all the details in arranging the blind bogies and bi-weekly tournaments and their remuneration, of course, comes from the profits that are realized from the merchandise that is awarded as prizes. Running these events takes quite a bit of time and involves a good deal of paperwork, but in the estimation of Guysick there hasn't yet been anything invented that equals interclub competition for moving merchandise out of a shop. And, as an indirect benefit, it creates more interest in golf at a club and thereby gives a further boost to pro sales.

Golfers Take Over

Out of the small weekly events has grown a big annual tournament which is played exclusively in appreciation of what Joe Guysick does for the club. Members don't permit Joe or his assistants to turn a hand in staging this affair as they handle the collection of entry fees, handicapping, pairings, etc. All the money that is collected is apportioned to the purchase of prizes, all bought through the pro shop, and so if the firm of Guysick and company hasn't been enjoying the rosiest profit prospects for the season, this event does a good deal in setting everything aright. Few clubs in the country do as much for their pro as members at Congress Lake do for Joe Guysick.

Congress Lake is located about 15 miles due south of Akron, O., near the picturesque village of Hartville which is in the heart of Amish country, famous for its

vegetable farms. Many of its members live as far as 40 miles away in Cleveland, and there also is good representation among the membership from Canton, Alliance and Akron. Of the 550 players at the club, about 30 per cent are women.

So that you don't get the impression that Joe Guysick happens to be one of those lucky fellows who is installed in a dream shop with a membership that appears to be almost 100 per cent behind him and makes money in spite of himself, it is well to keep in mind that Joe hasn't always worked amid such splendid surroundings. Furthermore, he has managed to run a pretty fair business in his three decades as a pro regardless of the settings in which he has found himself.

Views on Merchandising

Many of Guysick's ideas about merchandising are worth examining. Here are some of them:

- As has already been mentioned, he feels that the promotion of golf activity at a club should be the primary aim of any pro, not only because it helps his sales volume but because the club pays him a retainer to do so.

- When it comes to selling, certain restrictions probably are placed on a pro. He can't push merchandise at a member, but at the same time he shouldn't permit this thought to discourage him. If he is smart he will study his customers and find out which ones need a little prodding and which will buy without being pushed.

- Purchasing may well be the most important part of running a pro shop. To know how to buy, a pro has to develop market alertness — a feeling for when, where and how much to pay. This is done by listening to what the golfers themselves have to say, by studying daily newspaper ads, by keeping abreast of what clothing trade journals have to say about fashions, etc. A smart pro doesn't stock gadgets, he doesn't overstock any items in order to be a good fellow and help out a salesman and he spreads his buying around to cover all the best brands and labels.

No Fire Sales Necessary

- If a pro sticks with the recognized brands, he probably won't have to hold any fire sales to get rid of slow moving merchandise at the end of the season.

- It is wise not to let stock become too depleted in the fall. Too many customers
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Guysick's Dream Shop

(Continued from page 62)

are turned away — possibly for good. What isn't sold in the fall will move the following spring.

• As for women — go along with them! Individually, they probably are your best customers. Many women will buy three or four pairs of shorts at a time and, in most cases, blouses to match. A man will buy one pair of shorts or one pair of slacks and perhaps a shirt and let it go at that. Have you ever noticed how a wife who is shopping with her husband often suggests that he buy two items instead of one?

• If you look around long enough you can develop a good market outside the club for trade-in clubs. With that estab-

lished, you can afford to give more liberal allowances on sales of new clubs. If you can avoid it, don't start selling secondhand clubs to your members.

Has Island Display

The interior of the Congress Lake shop was designed by Display Creations of Detroit. An island display, the trademark of this firm, is located in the center of the sales room and runs about half the length of the shop. Its glass shelves, suspended on notched brass poles that extend from floor to ceiling, can be moved up or down to make possible many different display combinations. It is used exclusively for showing sports apparel. Three of the four walls in the shop are panelled in knotty pine which is finished with a white lead coating. Club, bag and shoe displays front



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much of the wall space. The club display, as you probably noticed in looking at the photos on page 62, is particularly impressive, occupying an uninterrupted stretch of wall space on the north side of the shop. On the opposite side of the sales room, these large picture windows look out on the course from the lounge area. Frosted recessed lights, supplemented by brass spots, provide lighting for the shop. A green, tweedish carpet extends from wall to wall.

The Indispensable Wife

Guysick's staff includes his wife, Jean, John Rainnieri, assistant pro and caddiemaster, and Art Williams and Randy Domer, shopmen. Mrs. Guysick, like so many distaff members of a pro staff, is indispensable. She does much of the buying of women's wear, handles the book-keeping and helps out on the sales floor. All billing is handled through the shop. The club, incidentally, underwrites any bad accounts that Guysick may have on the books, but fortunately for everyone concerned these have been literally nonexistent over the years.

Few, if any, display signs ever are seen

in the Congress Lake shop. A bulletin board in the shop, as well as those in the lockerrooms, are used to announce the arrival of new merchandise, or any specials that Guysick may run. In the spring, a large display of clubs and sportswear is set up in the main dining room of the clubhouse and is kept there for about two or three weeks.

Unlike many pros, Guysick doesn't bemoan the fact that his club business could be somewhat better. To go back to his views on merchandising, he feels that there is perhaps a little too much timidity in pushing the sales of playing equipment. Either that, or many pros aren't alert to the full potential in club business. That potential, Joe says, can only be developed by going out on the course on busy days and making a survey of players who may need new clubs and then cornering them and suggesting what they should buy.

1961 Golf Week Receipts

The latest report on the 1961 National Golf Week shows that the PGA has banked receipts of \$77,000. About 73,000 persons took part in the competition.