



One of the many fine looking combinations of displays in the Glen Echo shop.



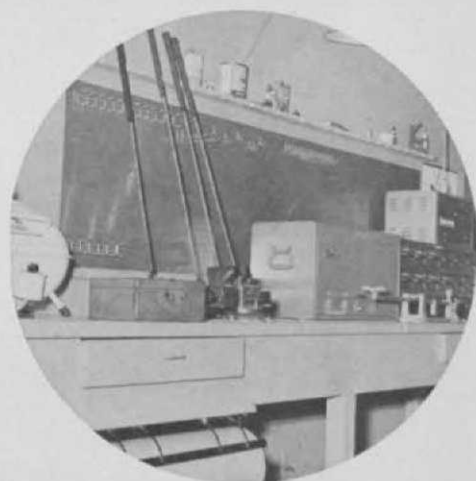
Father and son discuss merits of a golf ball. Don Clarkson took over from his father, Fred in 1951.

In the family tradition

Clarkson Sticks to the Book; Runs Solid Operation

If the coin had come up 'tails', Don Clarkson, pro at Glen Echo CC in Normandy, Mo., might be working today as an accountant or salesman or in some other occupation far removed from the golf scene. He is happy that the coin flipped the way it did because now he can't quite imagine himself in any field other than the one he's in.

It all came about in 1946. Fred Clarkson, Don's father and now pro emeritus at the St. Louis suburban club, was giving thought to retiring within the next few years. He wanted either Don or his brother to succeed him in the Glen Echo post. Both young men had just returned from service, and although it's



Here are some more views of the Glen Echo pro shop. It was completely renovated about three years ago and has light oak fixtures, sandstone walls and green carpeting.



traditional for the Clarksons to get into pro golf, neither had given much thought to making their livings in the game. So, they decided to resolve the issue by flipping a coin which, as it turned out, had Don's name written on it.

Fred Clarkson, now 77 and a native of Scotland, has nearly 60 years behind him in the game, 32 of them at Glen Echo as a full-time pro. Actually, he retired more than 10 years ago, but still in the best of health, he plays two or three times a week and has a following of the faithful at the Normandy club who insist that he continue to give them lessons. Once or twice a year he manages to shoot his age. Three of Fred's brothers, Arthur, Charles and Dick, made their livings as professionals in the western Illinois and northern Missouri area. So, it's as natural for the clan Clarkson to get into golf as it is for the Kennedys to work at being politicians.

Five Years of Training

Don Clarkson's apprenticeship lasted five years. When the elder Clarkson formally retired in 1951 his son, of course, succeeded to the throne. And, judging by the way the young man runs the Glen Echo shop, he learned every phase of the operation thoroughly when he was second in command.

There probably is nothing that you can immediately put your finger on that accounts for Don Clarkson's success in running a golf shop. It may be as one manufacturer's rep puts it: "Don has a real solid background," he says. "He has a fine sense of display, knows what is coming in or going out right down to the last pair of socks, and in general runs his place like a good businessman should."

As for young Clarkson himself, he says that he runs his operation pretty much in keeping with the book. "You just keep plugging away," he explains, "looking for opportunities to increase sales by doing as much advertising as your budget will permit, being alert to the possibilities for making sales and, of course, trying to overwhelm your members with good service."

Had to Woo the Women

As for plugging away, Don cites as an example his experience in selling to women players. They make up approximately one-third of the 225 members who

play at Glen Echo. Sales to them now account for about 30 per cent of the total volume, but it has been only in the last three years or so that Clarkson has been able to dent this part of his potential market.

"Our failing here was largely of our own making," Don candidly admits. "For many years we stocked a pretty fair assortment of women's wear and playing equipment, but we couldn't get the ladies to come into the shop to buy merchandise the way we thought they should. We used to conduct quite a few clinics for them, and every spring I'd give them a guided tour of the swing, using films, charts, etc., but still they weren't buying.

Wanted More Events

"Finally," Clarkson continues, "one of the lady players gave me the clue. We were still thinking of the women as being only morning and Tuesday afternoon players, as laboring in the shadows of their husbands, and that sort of thing. What they wanted was more activity in the way of tournaments, not only among themselves but in company with the men players.

"When we started paying more attention to them," the Glen Echo pro goes on, "our women's business picked up very appreciably. Now we have some kind of a ladies' tournament going every two weeks or so and our sales to the women have come pretty close to doubling themselves every year since 1958 or 1959. We expect them to continue to increase to the point where someday the ladies will be buying 50 or 60 per cent of the merchandise sold in the shop."

Clarkson tries to have a tournament running almost every week at the Normandy club. Each member is charged a \$15 annual fee to play in as many events as he chooses, with all the money that is collected being put into a fund for providing prizes.

Heavy on The Records

The Glen Echo pro is an inveterate record keeper, in fact to the extent that he has a reputation among Eastern Missouri PGA section pros of being a kind of frustrated accountant. Clarkson, of course, is amused by their estimate of him in this respect, but he defends his

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Clarkson Sticks to Book; Runs Solid Operation

(Continued from page 42)

attention to bookkeeping details by saying that if General Motors knows what it owns right down to the last bolt and nut, why shouldn't he know how many sport shirts he has on hand? In any event, running inventories on every item handled in the Glen Echo are kept up to date and nothing is bought until after the purchase journals are consulted. Ledger accounts also are kept on every member and have been since 1951. They play an important role in the shop's sales picture.

"We can go back and tell you how much every single member spent in the shop in 1955," says Clarkson. "These records aren't kept out of mere love for dealing with figures. There is a purpose behind them. They give us an idea of how much each person will spend every year, when he last bought a set of irons or woods or a bag. In short, they enable you to know your customers and whether they are buying as much as you'd like to sell them. I won't go so far as to say that we set up quotas on individuals, but in a pro shop operation you come to depend on getting so much annual revenue out of each member and it's only good business to go after it. Ledger accounts that go back a few years are the only guide for doing this."

Three Sales A Year

But as closely as Clarkson watches his buying, and in spite of the thorough sales records he maintains, he can't get away from holding at least three sales a year. He has carefully charted the ups and downs in his business and finds that late June and late August and, of course, mid-October, when the season is coming to a close, are the best periods for holding clearances. Only sportswear and shoes are discounted. It is rare when clubs are sold at cut rate at Glen Echo. To further protect his club market, Clarkson doesn't sell trade-ins to members.

The Normandy pro charges \$18 a year for storing clubs and besides regularly cleaning and repairing them, winterizes them. He operates the golf car concession, charging \$7 for 18 holes and \$4 for 9. There are 26 cars in the Glen Echo fleet, all of which are leased. On weekends and holidays, one of the assis-

tant pros ranges the course, ready to make repairs on any vehicle that isn't functioning as it should.

Clarkson's No. 1 assistant until this year was Ross Horst, who was called into service late in 1961. Homer Wolf now is filling the assistant position. And, of course, Don can always call on his father when business around the Glen Echo shop starts stirring and becomes a little more than the regular staff can handle.

When the Normandy shop was renovated late in 1959, the elder Clarkson collaborated with his son in drawing up the new design. Racks, display cases and counters are either built into the walls or adjacent to them so that the center portion of the rectangular display room is kept open except for a lounge area at one end of the shop. The room is 20 feet wide by 40 feet long and is finished with sandstone tinted plastered walls and light oak fixtures. The carpeting is green as are the drapes that can be drawn across four large windows.

Don Clarkson is a former president of the Eastern Missouri PGA and now serves as its tournament director.

Plan and Records Increase Efficiency, Cut Costs

By Donald MacKay, Sr.
Supt. Hartford (Conn.) CC

Just what do we mean when we speak of "increased efficiency" as applied to a golf course?

In the first place we have to have a plan in order to apply our mental and physical efforts and those of our staff, plus the work of our machines and materials, efficiently.

We can't merely say we are going to do the job more efficiently unless we make up our own scorecard in advance to enable us to determine whether or not we have succeeded.

Provisions for Emergencies

It is easy enough to lay out a plan of work that will succeed if nothing happens to interfere. But no plan is complete and workable unless it contains ample provision for meeting emergencies that are more or less sure to arise. For

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