



Chuck Pedersen (r) explains feature of golf shoes to woman member while husband samples egg-nog.

By CHUCK PEDERSEN

as told to Ben Chlevin

For *GOLFDOM's* ninth annual round-up of Xmas selling ideas for pro shop merchants we talked to 28-year-old Chuck Pedersen, in his third year as golf professional at Rolling Green CC, Arlington Heights, Ill. Chuck's 450 square foot shop is located 150 yards from the clubhouse, well screened by shrubbery. Here's how Chuck brings his customers in to buy for Christmas . . .

As far as I'm concerned there are two 'musts' in developing Christmas business: (1) Keep reminding your golfers that your shop is open and stocked for gift buying; (2) do everything to bring golfers into your shop as often as possible during the last two months of the year.

During the first of my three years as head pro at Rolling Green I bought *Golfdom's* "Christmas Shopping" catalog and sent it to my members. I did nothing else. And, I still pulled \$1,000 in Xmas sales!

Xmas Sales Formula:

Big Shop Traffic- Big Pro Profits

The second year I sent the catalog out and followed it up with letters, telephone calls to my customers, bulletin board signs in the clubhouse, holiday decorations in the shop, Christmas cards to my members and, during the two weeks just before Christmas, free cocktails to shop visitors. My business tripled over the year before!

Last year I had the pattern pretty well under way when, on Dec. 8, my shop was robbed. It was a wild scramble to get more stock to replace what I had lost (fortunately the thieves didn't find my golf ball stocks) but I was back in business by Dec. 15. I sent a letter to all my customers notifying them that I was again open for business. In the ten days remaining before Christmas, I sold enough to bring my volume even with the year before! This year I expect to show a large gain over last year.

\$35 for Cocktails

The cocktail gimmick costs me about \$35.00 for liquor, cheese and crackers, which I buy through the club. I pre-mix the cocktails. They include martinis, manhattans and egg nog. I have scotch and bourbon on hand for the straight drinkers, and soft drinks for non-drinkers and members' children. The expense is deductible of course and it pays off because every visitor to the shop feels some obligation to buy before leaving.

I save every carton my merchandise comes in during the year to use at Christmas time for gift wrapping. I gift-wrap only for customers who request it and I never refuse a request. We deliver to members' homes, within a 12 mile radius of the club, in answer to phone orders or orders from players going on to their place of business from the club. We group these deliveries to make as many as we can in one trip.

I keep a card index record of every sale I make in the shop during the year, noting the sizes and style and color preferences of each customer. Then, when a

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Christmas Sales Formula

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husband or wife phones or stops in to buy a gift, I use this information to help them pick the right item in the correct size. This creates many sales for me. Also, the size and preference record is a big help in ordering inventory throughout the year.

I know some pros only promote their best customers during Xmas. I send out the Golfdom pro catalog to playing and social members and to a list of non-member customers my advertising brings in.

In my experience, nine out of every ten people who come into the pro shop during the last two months of the year make a purchase—even if it's only a \$5 golf shirt.

Rehearses with Assistant

My assistants and I wear jackets at all times. I believe in taking every opportunity to showcase the merchandise I sell. Also, whenever there is a lull in traffic through the shop, I corner one of my assistants and we go through the 'customer game'. I ask him every possible question about the merchandise he is selling—the same questions customers would ask. I

require an answer for every question.

My assistants work on a percentage basis and they like it. They do very well. This leaves me more freedom to circulate through every part of the club to let members see I'm around and, therefore, in business. My shop is located 150 yards from the clubhouse, around a corner, and I have to play the part of a Pied Piper to bring them in. That's why the cocktail hour is a must for me.

Where merchandise is concerned I don't believe in 'saving' it for surprises. The minute a Christmas ball pack or any other new item comes in, even if it's in August, I put it in the front window immediately.

I do a lot of 'pre-selling'. When a woman player looks over my sweater display in September and can't quite make up her mind, I remind her that new colors and styles will be coming in Nov. 1, and offer to reserve one for her.

If she agrees, I get the item in within a few days and put it in the back of the shop until November and then I call her. The same with personalized balls. I take them early then deliver them at a future date. This spreads the billing for my customers over several months and makes it less burdensome for them to buy.

My staff is trained to start any sale with the very top price merchandise. With sweaters, we show the \$40 models first, then the \$30 items, then down to where the customer will buy. I believe that going the other way kills the sale.

Important: I keep the shop open until the 10th of January to enable golfers to exchange their gifts for the correct sizes, etc. They stay to buy other items while in the shop. Last year my post-Xmas business ran to \$600.

I use my Christmas cards to members — and other customers — as an important and timely 'kick' for the last, and most profitable, two weeks before Christmas. I send them out two weeks before Christmas so they're not lost in the mass of cards received immediately before the holiday.

Start in September

I look forward to my Christmas selling season because by the end of Sept. regular club duties and responsibilities are tailing off and I can give full time and attention to a real selling job. I've found that most players don't really see the merchandise in the shop during the playing season — unless they're in need of some particular equipment or accessory. At Christmas they come into the shop relaxed, prepared to visit and often are amazed at the variety and size of my stock which is about the same they've been exposed to all through the year. They look closely and almost always buy. To me, Christmas merchandising is an opportunity to try out all kinds of promotional ideas thoroughly — and at a profit. And, many of these ideas will work at other times of the year.

Very Simple Schedule

Basically, I follow a very simple schedule on my Christmas promotion and improvise around it. First, I send out the "Christmas Shopping" catalogs on Nov. 15 as the official kickoff. Then I put notices in the club magazine on Dec. 1 and start my advertising in the local papers. I follow up the catalog mailing with letters listing special 'buys' in equipment and apparel as 'leaders'. Where possible, I pencil a personal note on as many letters as possible before they're sent out. My Christmas cards go out on Dec. 15. At the same time, I send out notices and invitations on my two-week 'cocktail hour' for pro shop guests. After that I keep a sharp eye out for every opportunity to bring people into the shop by circulating constantly through the club.

IMPORTANT TO PROFESSIONALS—

Here are the national golf manufacturers who are showcasing their products for Christmas selling in GOLFDOM's 10th Annual (1963) Edition of

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING AT YOUR PRO SHOP

Acushnet Process Sales Co.
Bowen, Inc.
Brandell Products
Bristol Pro-Golf, Inc.
K. L. Burgett Co.
Champion Glove Co.
DiFini Originals, Inc.
Dunlop Tire & Rubber Co.
First Flight Co.
Gallopings Games, Inc.
Gilson
Golcraft, Inc.
Golf Designs, Inc.
Walter Hagen Golf
C. M. Hill Co.
Hillerich & Bradsby, Inc.
Ben Hogan Co.
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Haymaker
Jarman-Williamson Co.
Kline Products Co.
MacGregor Golf, Inc.
Munsingwear, Inc.
Northwestern Golf Co.
P G A Golf Equipment Co.
Parks Products
Plymouth Golf Ball Co.
Shakespeare Co.
Sit-N-Rest Golf Bag Co.
A. G. Spalding & Bros. Co.
United States Rubber Co.
Wagemaker, Inc.
Wilson Sporting Goods Co.
Worthington Golf, Inc.

NOTE: A complete information brochure on the 1963 edition of "Christmas Shopping" pro catalog has been sent to every professional in the United States. If you haven't received your copy, let us know — TODAY!