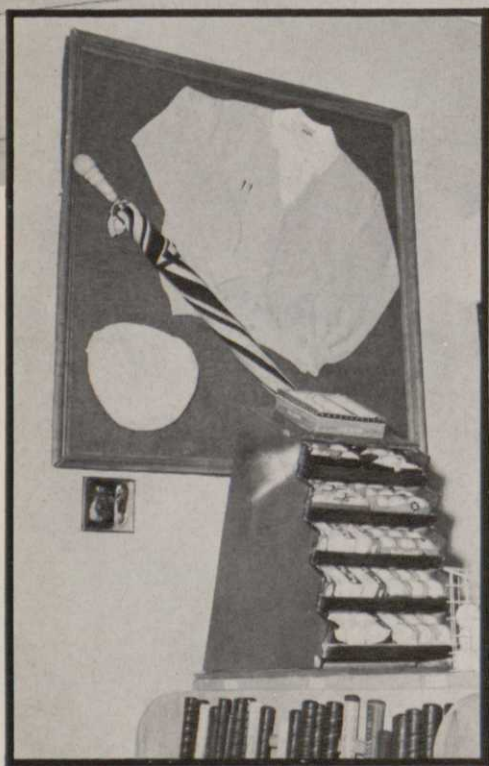




Panelled shop at Algonquin, west wall of which is seen above, is 15 feet wide and about 40 feet long. Assistant Bob Willett, in charge of stock, is partial to framing displays (left), several of which are seen in the shop.

## Women, Bless 'Em, Register Ring

**T**here is a suspicion that affable, soft spoken Milon Marusic has made a blue chip operation out of running the pro shop at Algonquin CC in St. Louis by getting women interested in playing golf and then overwhelming them by catering to them. It's not that male players at the club are slighted or ignored, or perhaps chased off the property on days when the ladies want to take over the course. Nothing like that at all. It's just that business has swelled by a very reassuring





Personalized gift balls, shirts and carryalls were featured in Marusic's Christmas display.



margin since Marusic convinced the women they should desert the bridge tables and take up the more healthful pastime of playing golf. He has the figures to prove it.

Milon has been at Algonquin for eight full seasons. Since he first took over the shop operation there, his quorum of male players has remained steady at about 180. In the meantime, the 70 or so women who were Algonquin regulars in 1956 have increased to nearly 140. In addition, there are about 60 irregular women golfers who occasionally play nine holes. These figures only tell half the story. Now let's look at the ones that are prefaced by dollar signs and are more comforting to any man who makes his living as a professional.

Eight years ago, Marusic opened his shop with a pretty thin inventory. By 1958 he was carrying an average stock of around \$15,000. Last year, this had

## Make the Cash at Algonquin

been increased to \$25,000. All these years he was encouraging more women to play golf, mainly by conducting five well ballyhooed clinics for them in the spring. Then, the TV golf shows started to kind of swarm over the magic lantern and the ladies who couldn't be persuaded before, now started looking up the pro and arranging for lessons. By 1960, Algonquin's narrow 92 acres were being overrun by about as many women players as could be accommodated.

Marusic doesn't give complete credit to the women for having made it necessary for him to increase his stock by approximately 65 per cent in five years. But he feels that they have been responsible for perhaps 75 per cent of the increase. Why? Because more new women players are buying, those who were playing and buying before are now buying more, and between these two groups they have their husbands buying like they never bought before. It has been a profitable chain reaction.

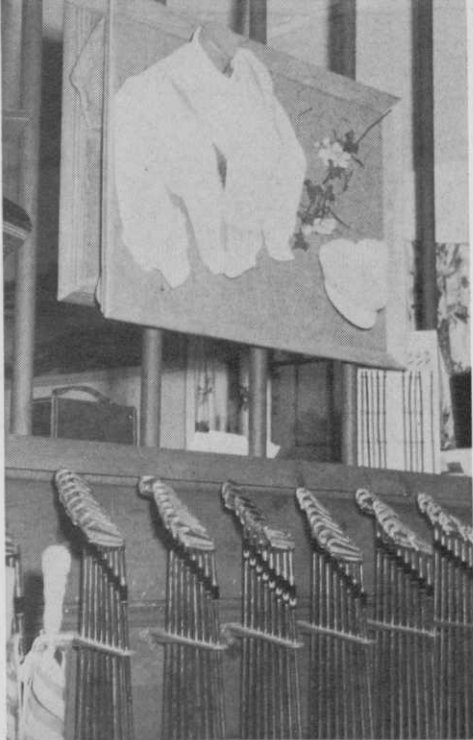
### Make or Break The Operation

"The women, bless them, can make or break a shop," says Milon. They may be conservative when it comes to investing in equipment, but they more than make up for this in their sportswear purchases. Many of them will buy two items of apparel where a man, being all too practical, will buy only one, and then not before he thinks it is absolutely necessary. One of the real advantages of having a large group of women golfers is that the more of them there are, the better dressed the men will be. I'm convinced of this."

A pro at a club like Algonquin, where the acreage is restricted, has to make his stake through his merchandising efforts. Lesson giving is curtailed because the practice range is too small. It's almost impossible for a male student to use a wood when he is taking a lesson on the range — and, as Marusic points out, men



Above is the Algonquin pro shop as it is seen from the 18th green. (Right) Rose sprig adds color to another framed display that features woman's sweater and knit cap.



want to hit at least eight wood shots to one iron when they are paying for instruction. The women, fortunately, don't have this problem to contend with since about 95 per cent of them can't hit the ball beyond the range site.

#### Cut Down Idle Time

Perhaps the best thing about having a large contingent of women players, as the Algonquin pro sees it, is that there is never as much idle time on a course. When something like 200 lady swingers are registered for golf, and two out of three of them play an average of two rounds a week, that insures that the course is being almost continuously occupied during the mornings and afternoons from Tuesday through Friday. The men,

of course, come on in the evenings and on Wednesday afternoons, and the weekends are almost entirely devoted to club tournaments. The upshot of this is that pro shop traffic goes on from morning until night without letup, the well known exposure-to-the-merchandise factor is worked overtime and, most important, there is steady consumption of golf goods. A shop can't help but get rid of a large volume of stock when this is the case.

Business at Algonquin is good enough that Marusic has never seen fit to discontinue a ball imprinting practice that he inherited from his predecessor. Balls that are bought in the shop are stamped from individual metal plates with the names of the buyers who use this service. When the balls that are lost in the lake or out on the course are found, they are returned to the original owners at a charge of only 15 cents per ball. About two out of three members use the imprinting service. Many pros frown on an arrangement of this kind, saying it would make serious inroads into their ball business. Marusic, however, states that the loss here is not as great as imagined, and that it is a goodwill price he is willing to pay to get approximately 85 or 90 per cent of his members' patronage.

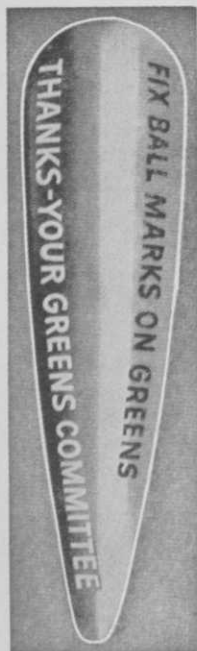
*(Continued on page 102)*



Bob Willett, Milon Marusic, head pro, and Jim Barton, in charge of merchandising, discuss the packaging of golf balls.



## STOP BALL MARKS ON GREENS!



ACTUAL SIZE

Deep or shallow ball marks can now be a putting hazard of the past.

If only 20% of the approach shots hit the greens, it would total thousands of ugly ball marks per green, each year.

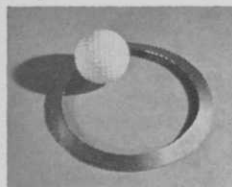
The golfers who wait for the Superintendent and his men to do this expensive repair job will continue to putt over the shallow and deep ball marks.

*Remember these holes must be repaired a few minutes after they have been made. Your Superintendent does not have enough money or men to repair ball marks as soon as made.*

This and other years, be kind to those beautiful greens, your fellow golfers and that proud and hardworking Golf Course Supt.

**PRICES: For plain or imprinted as shown — F.O.B. Des Moines, Iowa**  
**1,000 — \$65      500 — \$35**  
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**Superintendent's Labor Savers!**



## CUP-LESS

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inches; easily moved with putter blade, spreading traffic wear and tear over entire green instead of localizing it.

Packaged in dozen lots — Shipment prepaid  
**1 doz. — \$10; 2 doz. — \$18**

**WOODSIDE GOLF  
& Park Supply Co.,**

Des Moines 13, Iowa

## Women Make Register Ring

(Continued from page 64)

This 85 or 90 per cent, by the way, is willing to buy top quality goods at pro shop prices. The Algonquin shop in the eight years Marusic has been running it, never has introduced much second-line merchandise because it doesn't want to start a bad precedent. If cheaper apparel or equipment were to be brought in, the shop wouldn't be able to compete with the department and sporting goods stores. In addition, very little stock is sold through sales. Almost every week during the busy season, however, Marusic runs a specialty promotion in which one or a few items are played up in preference to other merchandise. Discounts on these are held to a minimum, if they are given at all.

Algonquin is open all year and play continues fairly heavy through November. The fact that it does, opens up the Christmas season and makes December one of the better sales months. Marusic and his assistants, Jim Barton and Bob Willett, agree that the elaborate gift wrapping service they have set up has had as much to do as anything with the successful holiday business they have enjoyed in the last four or five years. It particularly impresses the women players who are Algonquin's most active gift shoppers.

### Don't Discontinue It

Barton, incidentally, advises other shops not to put the wrapping paraphernalia away at the first of the year. Christmas gift buying can spill over to other holidays on a fairly large scale if a shop is always prepared to wrap gift merchandise. "There is something in that colorful paper and those pretty bows that excite people," Barton points out. "A plain box and an ordinary piece of string doesn't produce the same effect. You might say that the gift without the wrapping paper is bare."

Another tip that the Algonquin pro staff passes on is to strongly encourage persons who buy new clubs to keep the old sets they ordinarily would trade in. The idea is to impress them that a second set of clubs comes in handy if they do much travelling. The new set can be kept at the club and the old one perhaps in the trunk of the player's car, or at his home, where it is readily accessible in case he has to make a flying trip and doesn't

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have time to pick up his clubs at the club.

## **Trade-In Solution**

"This idea," says Milon Marusic, "is slowly catching on. Pros should push it more than they do. Some players are very happy to get a suggestion of this kind. What is most important, though, is that it can help to solve our trade-in problem. It could mean that we won't have to beat the bushes like we have in the past trying to get rid of the old clubs that have had to be taken in when we make a sale of new ones. If people can own a second car maybe we can convince them that they should own a second set of clubs."

Weekend tournaments play a very important part in the St. Louis club's activity calendar. Possibly it is because Marusic has campaigned over the years to keep the Algonquin events uncomplicated and easy to enter. This encourages the 120 and 130 shooters to be just as enthused about playing in the Saturday and Sunday tourneys as the low handicap golfers. The result is that possibly 50 per cent more members take part in the weekend specials than would be the case

if the less talented players were reluctant to play with their betters. That 50 per cent is vital from the pro's viewpoint. It means that many more people are passing through the pro shop — and buying.

## **Fine Caddie Program**

Algonquin's caddie program, which is indirectly connected with the pro operation as it is at most clubs, is one of the country's best. Many members go out of their way to encourage high school boys in their neighborhoods to carry clubs at the course during the summer. Thus, the services of the highest type youngsters are pretty well assured. New caddies are given thorough indoctrination by Caddiemaster Al Rudder and then are required to walk the course three times with experienced club carriers before they are sent out on their own. Caddie Day, held at the end of the summer, has become something of a blue ribbon affair. The boys attend a party, are dined, given pool privileges and take part in a tournament. Merit prizes are awarded and, in addition, each of the 90 or so caddies is given a gift of some kind. In the last eight years, eight Algonquin youngsters have qualified for Evans Scholarships.



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**CADDY-ROLL RENTAL SERVICE**  
Three Rivers, Michigan

Before coming to Algonquin, Milon Marusic worked as an assistant for several years at clubs in California. His introduction to the pro shop, however, came at Wolfert's Roost CC in Albany, N.Y., where personable Jack Gormley presided immediately after World War II as pro-supt. Jack, in fact, induced Milon to study turf management at the University of Massachusetts. However, when Marusic moved to the West Coast he concentrated only on the pro side of the business, probably figuring that he'd be farther ahead to cultivate women golfers and their purchasing potential than turf-grass. His success at the St. Louis club leaves no doubt that this was a wise choice. Milon is not a stay-at-home professional, by the way. He manages to play a dozen tournaments a year, winging down to Central and South America every spring for the PGA's Caribbean circuit events and making Mexico City in the fall for the Mexican Open. He has played in ten PGA Championships and four Opens.

Classified Ads • P. 132

## Countering Corrosion

*(Continued from page 40)*

The final major problem was that of irrigation. Since my introduction to golf back in 1925 consisted of being paid \$4 a night for watering the Annadale golf course in Pasadena, I have always realized the importance of irrigation. In the Far West, every aspect of course design is complicated by water — either too much of it or not enough. In the majority of cases, it is the latter.

I feel that a golf course can be no better than its irrigation system and the materials used for it. It is a waste of time and money to design and construct a course only to have it burn up during the first dry spell.

Design and installation of the irrigation system for the Shore course offered problems that were consistent with the other aspects of our work. Proximity to the Pacific, and being situated in a forested area, meant that we were working in extremely corrosive soil. Piping, valves,

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