



Ross Collins' main Christmas display occupied the center of his shop. Holley wound around framed pegboard tableau set off collection of men's equipment and accessories at time this photo was taken. Later, women's playing items and sportswear occupied this spot. At right is a cut down version of display window seen on cover.



That Display Window *It Can Be A Magnet in Your Merchandising*

Ross Collins would tear out a wall and put one in if he had to . . . As showpieces go, it's a pro shop's best asset



Bay at front of Lakewood shop looks out on the first tee. A short distance to the left of this window is the practice green. Actually, this shop has two display windows which give Collins' merchandise double exposure.

Adjacent to the exterior door of Ross Collins' shop at Lakewood CC in Dallas there is about a four foot width of floor space that wasn't used very imaginatively until last summer. This area is fronted by a floor to ceiling plate glass window, making it perfect for display purposes. For the first three years that Collins was in his new shop, which was completed in 1960, it didn't occur to him that this small space should be used as a showpiece. A counter, running the length of the shop, extended into the area and, while it was used for sportswear display, there was no reason why part of it couldn't be removed.

So, Collins cut the counter back and allotted a space, roughly four by nine or ten feet, for a display window. It faces the first tee and also can be seen from



Ross Collins is a onetime college athletic director who couldn't resist the urge to get into the golf business. Counter's such as one seen here, ring the Lakewood shop on three sides. This one was cut down to make room for the display window.

part of the practice green, which is located in front of the shop. Usually it is occupied by a full length female manikin or a half female or half male model attired in the latest sportswear ensemble. Occasionally, though, various playing equipment arrangements are shown in the display window. Ed Travis and Roland Snipes, assistant pros at Lakewood, are the artists in charge of the shop's window dressing.

Women Are Impressed

"Women members," says Travis, "are particularly impressed by what they see in our display window. At least three or four times last summer we sold sportswear combinations right off the model's back because some of our women players insisted on buying them on the spot. It's too bad we don't have enough space to put up a half dozen manikins."

Says Ross Collins: "You don't realize what a window display can do for you until you put one in. Unfortunately, most pro shops are built or bricked up in such a way that it is almost impossible to have a display window. That's one of the missing links in pro merchandising. After seeing how a window has helped our business, I think I'd tear out a wall and put one in if I didn't have one."

Collins, a product of North Texas State College which also claims Don January and Billy Maxwell as graduates, was an athletic director at Arkansas A & M for five years before deciding to get into golf in 1953. He served his pro apprenticeship as an assistant to Graham Ross at Dallas AC CC and, in 1956, was named to be the shopmaster at Lakewood. While an amateur, he won the National Left-handers' Championship in 1951, claimed the Arkansas Open the same year and captured that state's Amateur title three times. So, it was probably inevitable that he would gravitate to golf as a full time proposition. In the recent National Left-handers Open, played in De Soto Lakes, Fla., Collins was runnerup to Thorne Wood.

On The Spectacular Side

As a merchandiser, Ross professes to be no more than a person who works hard and steadily at his business, trying to improve his volume a little each year. In the eight years he has been at Lakewood, the sales and profit curves have progressed steadily upward for him, so the conclusion is that he knows something about shooting for goals and attaining them. His Christmas sales, incidentally, have been somewhat on the spectacular.

lar side, considering that in the last four or five years they have consistently jumped from 10 to 20 per cent annually.

An Economic Law?

"A rather amazing thing," says Collins, "is that total Christmas sales in our shop have increased year after year by very close to the same percentage as sales of personalized golf balls. In 1962, for example, we sold more than 120 dozen; for 1963 we sent our goal at 150." (He made it! Ed) The Dallas professional has no explanation of what for him has become a kind of economic law — sales follow the golf ball — other than to say that the personalized ball apparently is the best starting point for getting the Christmas shopper warmed up to falling into an expansive buying mood.

The Christmas sales program at the Dallas club involves more than merely importing merchandise, setting it out and hoping that the members will pick it up. Early in November, Collins, Travis and Snipes start checking every bag in the racks (there are 400 of them) and noting what items could or should be replaced. Considering that golf balls are included in this inventory taking, they estimate that they inspect at least 10,000 pieces of playing equipment. A master list is prepared from their findings and an equipment order made accordingly. Sportswear is ordered on the basis of the previous year's sales.

100 Phone Hours

Around Dec. 1, after Golfdom's "Christmas Shopping at Your Pro Shop" catalogs and followup letters have been mailed out, the Lakewood staff gets busy on the phone. Collins estimates that at least 100 phone hours are logged in getting in touch with potential gift buyers in the three week period preceding Christmas day. Emphasis, of course, is placed on the items that the rack check has shown should be replaced. Such diligence has to make December the best month of the year for the Lakewood shop operation.

In the day to day scheme, golf balls, gloves and hats or caps are the best selling articles. It is estimated that a Texan who is a regular golfer sweats through an average of one glove a month, making the handwear market a very steady and quite lucrative one for the pro if he constantly keeps reminding the player that his glove may need replacement. Hats and caps also are potentially big sellers if the pro staff is alert enough to push them.

Palm Beach Gardens Is Site of PGA Merchandise Show

The PGA's fifth golf merchandise show will be held for the first time at the new National Golf Club in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., Jan. 28-Feb. 1. Don E. Fischer of Evansville (Ind.) CC is the show director.

The 1964 show will be housed under a giant tent and will be held during the playing of the PGA National GC Championship. More than 1,000 pros are expected to attend the show which is staged so that manufacturers and distributors of professional golf equipment get a chance to meet their customers face-to-face.

The first three shows were held in Dunedin, Fla., and last year's exhibit was held in Port St. Lucie, Fla.

The deadline for making display reservations at the show was Dec. 23.

"It's a funny thing," says Ross Collins, "but a cap is the last thing a fellow will replace unless you can call attention to the fact that his present one looks a bit shabby. You have to do it in a subtle way, of course. We have made a habit of looking at caps the way a shoe man automatically looks at a person's shoes. The customer oftentimes senses what we're doing. If it occurs to him that maybe he needs a new cap, he'll ask us; either that, or he takes the hint and buys one without asking.

They Add Up

"Some pros may ask," continues Collins, "why I make such an issue of caps. They are relatively minor items. But along with balls, gloves, socks and similar small articles, they can do wonderful things for your gross sales. A hat or cap should be a throw-in suggestion with every shirt or pair of slacks or shorts that is sold. Golfers are becoming more clothes conscious and they are thinking more in color combinations. A blue combination, for example, doesn't stop with dark blue slacks and a light blue shirt. It includes a cap and a glove to match. If sportswear manufacturers constantly emphasize the combination theme, it's up to the pro to sell it all the way. After all, it puts money in his pocket."

Like other pros, Ross Collins is some-

(Continued on page 103)

would have traveled in milli and micro-seconds, showing the yardage immediately on the projection screen. At the same time the film advances automatically. If a person hits a 185 yard drive on a 380 yard hole, the next view the player sees is the flag from 195 yards out.

The direction of the ball is indicated by a white or blue spot if the ball lands near the center of the fairway; or a red spot if the ball hooks or slices out of bounds.

Once on the green, the player either putts from a "birdie circle" or from long range. Any ball stopping within 15 feet of the flag is considered within birdie distance. Actual putting is done on a green located in front of the screen. Once the player holes out he pushes a button and a picture of the next hole flashes on the screen.

Golf-O-Mat was introduced in the spring of 1963 and units are now in operation in Portland, Ore., Lake Tahoe, Calif., and Winchester, Mass. According to Robert Hopp, Product Investors president, 50 more Golf-O-Mat units will be in operation by next month.

Merchandise Magnet

(Continued from page 38)

what restricted in his advertising and promotion. He does, however, distribute more than 400 Christmas Shopping catalogs and supplements these with two or three letters a year to members plus a weekly ad in the Lakewood club bulletin. His section in the bulletin lists schedules of club events, gives playing hints and descriptions of merchandise that may be featured in the coming week or weeks.

In his letters, and occasionally in the bulletin, Collins repeats a theme that he

**wanting to be
"in the know"...**

(See page 104)

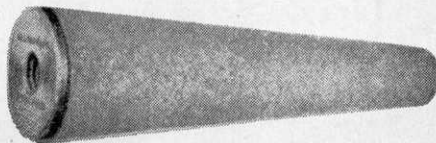
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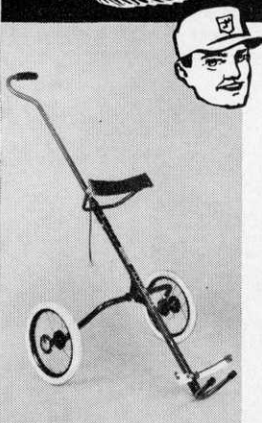
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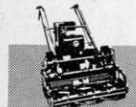
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feels perhaps 50 per cent of his members sometimes lose sight of: The pro is not paid by the club . . . The shop, in all, supports eight people . . . It has to be maintained on a better than breakeven basis or the pro will be forced to go out of business . . . Equipment and sportswear can be bought cheaper outside the club but they aren't accompanied by the free service and small favors that the pro staff constantly performs for the members.

He Owns the Fleet

Besides his two assistants, Travis and Snipes, Collins employs two golf car maintenance men, a caddiemaster, a bag rack attendant and a range supervisor. The Lakewood pro owns 35 golf cars and 24 members own their vehicles. Every car is washed after it is driven 18 holes. Asked why he has invested so much money in a car fleet when he could lease it, Ross Collins' reply is to the effect that if a car manufacturing company feels it can make money by leasing its vehicles there is no reason why a pro shouldn't own them and take the entire rental revenue for himself. Risk, of course, is involved in this policy, but Collins manages to get the cars out for enough 18-hole rounds during the season to make money on them.

Lakewood's club cleaning and storage charge is \$1.80 a month. Approximately 400 bags are kept in the racks the year around since Dallas is a 12-month golf town. The club's 300 men and 130 women players, incidentally, play more than 35,000 rounds a year. Unlike many pros who claim that they lose money on the cleaning and storage service, Collins feels that he does a little better than break even on it. The revenue from this operation pays the salary of his rack man and partly defrays the caddiemaster's salary.

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The Lakewood pro pays his assistants a commission in addition to their salaries. Both employer and employees prefer this type of arrangement. The assistant pros have an agreement whereby they split the revenue they personally receive from giving lessons even though one may give more than the other. However, Ross Collins estimates that he gives approximately 75 per cent of the lessons at the club, simply because the members request that he instruct them. Collins is one of that slowly growing minority of lefthanded teachers.

The Lakewood pro shop carries a continuous inventory of between \$15,000 and \$20,000. Sales would justify a larger one. But enough equipment and sportswear manufacturers have warehouses in and around Dallas that non-standard merchandise doesn't have to be kept in stock at the shop but can be picked up within a few hours after the customer has ordered it. Collins, like any good businessman, takes advantage of the convenience of location of the warehouses and estimates that the annual savings of capital he would otherwise have to tie up is quite large.

Cut Down on Details

Collins and his assistants tried several methods of inventory handling and purchase and sales recording before settling on a system that is now used. At one time a perpetual inventory was kept, but it became so involved that it was finally realized that an extra man would have to be hired on a half-day basis to keep it. At the same time, a card index on each customer's sizes, preferences, etc. was attempted but this, too, was discarded because it was too time-consuming.

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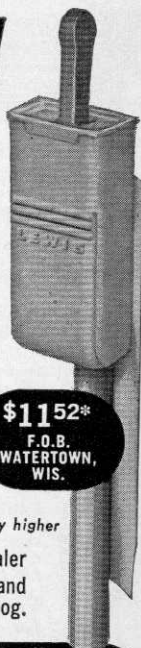
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golf balls, gloves and caps. Duplicate sales slips are passed on to the front office for customer billing. Then they are returned to the shop and filed in account fashion so that information as to the buying habits, sizes, etc. of each player is readily available. Lakewood CC, incidentally, indemnifies the shop against any bad debt losses.

Purchases at Lakewood are handled through what Collins calls "envelope" accounts. All buying orders, bills and receipts for each company with which the shop does business are kept in 10 by 13-inch envelopes. A record of purchases and payments is kept on the face of the envelope. This information also is entered in a purchase ledger on an item by item basis so that it can be used as an adjunct to inventory taking and for re-ordering purposes.

Understanding Motives

(Continued from page 26)

will go elsewhere for his satisfaction.

Physical skill training, another psychological aspect of golf, is an area in which psychologists have long been interested and to which they have devoted a great deal of research. We have found that the major principle of learning a physical skill is that of reinforcement, which says that a satisfying action tends to be repeated and that unsatisfying actions tend to be dropped because they are not reinforced by pleasure or reward.

In learning a complex physical performance, such as a golf swing, the individual parts which produce the most satisfying effect usually are retained; those which do not satisfy are discontinued. Of course I'm referring to the rank beginner, whose skill level over the first few lessons follows this predictable pattern. I'm limiting this discussion to the novice, for the ups and downs of the more proficient golfer require a great deal more research before they can be analyzed.

Duties During Lesson

The pro has many different duties during a lesson. One is verbal pre-training in which he begins to familiarize the student with the golf vocabulary and focuses attention on the movements the student will be performing and the feeling he will experience from them. Such verbal pre-training pays off in results.

Other important goals are attained during the verbal pre-training session. The pupil is warmly indoctrinated and favor-