

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-

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