



C. Ross Leech, Elmcrest manager (l) and Pro Charlie Burkart look over golf shoe stock.

You Can't Sell Color Unless You Wear It

*It would be worth a trip
to Cedar Rapids for Demaret
to see Charlie Burkart's wardrobe*

By JOE DOAN

Some people call him the "home club Demaret."

Others say Demaret would have his eyes opened if he saw this man's wardrobe.

For the women's first golf brunch of the 1964 season, he was resplendent in pastel — pink shoes, pink socks, pink slacks, pink coat and pink tie. One of the ladies upon beholding him said: "But he's wearing a shocking white shirt!"

His male members at the Elmcrest G & CC in Cedar Rapids, Ia., kind of hold back in the early spring to see just what kind of plumage he is going to bust out in — then after they have had a chance to study this multi-fashion plate, they rush in to buy, trying to emulate him.

It's good for business. Charlie Burkart will tell you that.

"You can't sell color unless you wear it," is the way he puts it.

So you don't get the wrong impression, Charlie Burkart sells more than just golfwear to his players. Here he shows a driver to Mrs. Forest Smith.

Burkart has been the pro at Elmcrest for 30 years. Back in the days when the shops were offering nothing more exciting than drab brown sweaters with trousers to match, Charlie was venturing pale blues, light greens and what then were known as exotic reds. That made him not only a pioneer in color, but in sportswear, because several years before World War II started he was conducting a one-man campaign to make golfers just as conscious of their appearances as of their games.

Burkart was at least 15 years ahead of the times. In recent years other pros have closed in on him because a pro shop is no longer a pro shop if it isn't loaded practically to the indirect lights with golfwear. But as one manufacturer's representative says: "Charlie Burkart can still teach them a few things about merchandising. There isn't a pro in my territory who outsells Charlie and that takes in some at clubs that are larger and richer than his."

Beautiful World of Fashions

The Elmcrest shopmaster isn't just a walking style show — he's the kind of a fellow who stages them. Early last March, for instance, before many pros were even thinking about opening their shops for the spring and summer seasons, Burkart invited the ladies in for coffee, finger sandwiches and mints and then proceeded to open their eyes to the beautiful world of fashions for 1964. There are 100 golf-playing women at Elmcrest and attendance was somewhere around the 90 per cent mark. In quite a few cases, husbands insisted on accompanying their wives.

Some pros might say that you can't successfully hold a style show before April 1 at the earliest. Burkart, who isn't aware of this rule or ignores it if he is, has an altogether different outlook. "By the first of March," he says, "the women are tired of winter and winter clothing. They're dying to see summer fashions. If you don't show them, the fellow downtown will. Business is always good at these early showings, probably because I'm one of



the first to bring out the new lines. I wouldn't take a chance on holding that first show later than the last week in March."

Show Every Day

So far as the men players are concerned, they see a style show every day. "Charlie dazzles them with his change of pace," says his assistant, George Frajman. "Some of our players insist that he has a different outfit for every day of the season. That's a little exaggerated, of course. But you'd be surprised at the number of fellows who come to me and say something like, 'Where did Charlie get that pair of slacks — and can you get a pair like that for me?' They say you have to display in this business, and we do. Only our displays walk."

Color doesn't begin and end with the Elmcrest professional's attire. It spills over onto the walls and ceiling of his shop, which he and Frajman decorate

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Capital Improvements

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making a decision as to whether or not some facility should be added or expanded.

Every country club has an economic level. It remains quite stable over the years. In the last analysis, the club's economic level should determine just how ambitious or large any capital expenditure should be. It shouldn't be forgotten that when there is capital expansion, a day by day expense increase goes along with it and becomes permanently established.

How Many Will Enjoy It?

Almost as important as the economic aspect of any large addition to a club's property or facilities is the question of how many people actually are going to enjoy it. Previously, we referred to the skeet trap or bowling alleys or even the landing strip that some clubs invest in. These might be expanded to take in ski facilities, curling rinks and similar facilities. They are fine things to have if they are economically justifiable and if a reasonable number of members plan to use them. What percentage of members will be able to take advantage of any new facility is something that individual clubs have to work out.

I have come across several clubs that haven't necessarily been wrecked by influential members, but the damage has been great. There are those, of course, who say that the membership can vote down anything that it feels is not economically feasible or which the majority doesn't actually want. That is fine. The veto should be exercised when a planned capital expenditure seems to be out of line. Members, too, should protest when expenses outrace income, making year-end assessments necessary to keep the club out of the red.

Votes Are Dictated

But, like in politics, the power of the veto is rarely used at most clubs. When it comes to voting on almost any issue, members are apathetic or they allow the influential members to dictate their votes. Too many people don't want to be accused of "standing in the way of progress."

Too many are swayed by that patented phrase, "Well, if the club across town has a polo field, certainly we can afford one."

Country club members can't bury their heads in the sand. If there is need and demand for an additional lounge, an expanded dining room, a curling rink and enough people will benefit from one or all, these things should be added. But that familiar old question, "Is this addition necessary?" should be asked of himself by every member in the club when some new facility is suggested. I have talked with too many officials in the last year or so who are alarmed by the high cost of keeping country club doors open to know that a good deal of money is needlessly going out the window, or that too many members are not realizing benefits from some of the things they are paying for.

Wear Color to Sell It

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every year or two, shortly before the women's fashion show is held. This year the place is brilliant in a combination of pattern wallpaper, yellow painted walls and woodwork and a touch of light gray to harmonize with the carpeting.

"Don't go overboard on me as a golf-wear specialist," says Charlie Burkart. "I'm interested in more than just selling and wearing flamboyant sportswear."

From which, Burkart proceeds to detail some of the things he does, and has done, in his more than 38 years in the golf business.

Still Uses "Specials"

As far back as 1929 he was immersed in Junior golf programs, running free clinics for several months and climaxing them with a series of tournaments for different age groups. More than once he reached into his own pocket to buy trophies so that the kids who did well in the tournaments had mementos to show for their achievements. The Junior program continues to be an important fixture at the Cedar Rapids club.

Player Sells Self

There are about 250 men and 100 women players at Elmcrest. That many

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golfers constitute a very good market for clubs and Burkart feels that he does as well as the next fellow in taking advantage of it. "You don't actually sell clubs," Charlie says. "You try to keep your eyes and ears open to find out who might be in the market for a new set. In between times, you keep suggesting that a player might want to try out a single club, or a set of woods or a set of irons. If he finally does, and shows the least bit of interest in them, you show him why the new clubs are better than his old ones and how he can hope to improve his game by buying them. You try to be as knowledgeable and convincing as you can, but in the long run the player sells himself."

Burkart owns the golf cars at Elmcrest, renting them at a rate of \$4 for nine and \$7 for 18. His season's storage and cleaning rate is \$15. His wife handles the shop books and does the billing and a Cedar Rapids auditing firm prepares the year-end statements and handles the tax work. The Elmcrest shop is open from March 1 through October. Then, on December 1, Burkart and his assistant return for

another month to take care of the Christmas shopping business.

In spite of the large volume of sportswear that is sold at the Elmcrest club, Charlie Burkart still has to resort to "specials" to get rid of all that he orders. Much of the leftover merchandise is sold from under a tree on the first tee on weekends or when club tournaments are played. At the end of the season there still may be a few women's items hanging over, but there is a suspicion that anything in the men's lines that isn't sold goes into a dresser drawer or closet at Charlie's home. How else does a fellow build up a wardrobe like the one he has?

The nineteenth annual Jaycee Junior golf tournament will be played in St. Paul, Aug. 3-8, as part of the Sports Spectacular sponsored by the Jaycee organization. Tennis and track and field competitions will be staged simultaneously with the golf event. About 200 of the country's leading Junior golfers will play in the tourney. Last year, Don Iverson of La Crosse, Wis. won the tourney with a 282.