

Pros Catch Fire on Juniorized Club Idea

By **HERB GRAFFIS**

"Pro-Juniorizing" of golf clubs, the sales and service idea of cutting down used clubs and fitting them to youngsters, will mean perhaps a million dollars in new revenue to the golf business this year.

Bright forecasts of the effect of the Pro-Juniorized campaign, as presented in February *GOLFDOM* (p. 48), were made by several professionals during the PGA Seniors' gathering at the PGA National CC.

Something spectacular has to be done to get the old clubs out of the way. Trade-in allowances and the difficulty encountered in selling used clubs in competition with smart looking cheaper sets present serious problems for professionals as well as manufacturers, was the consensus of pro opinion at Palm Beach Gardens.

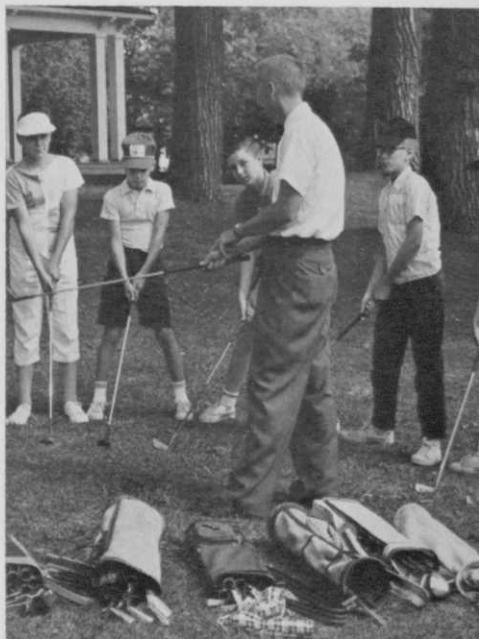
"My net profit on club sales last year was about 10 per cent less than in 1962", said a veteran New York professional. "I took a trimming on trade-ins. I'm still stuck with some of them." He continued:

"*GOLFDOM*'s article on Pro-Juniorized clubs gave me the hunch I've been looking for. Now I'll be able to do something worthwhile for kids at the club. That will go over big with them and their parents. But, of course, the primary thing, is that Pro-Juniorizing is the way to get

a lot of old clubs off the market and make a place for new ones.

"Pro-Juniorized clubs are the best idea I've seen for maintaining the market price of top quality pro clubs," the New York professional continued. "With the price cutters constantly threatening our market, professionals need all the help they can get to sell the top quality clubs at a profit."

Discussing Pro-Juniorized clubs, the



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pros generally agreed that cutting down used clubs to Junior sizes will mean that the person who buys a new set and consents to having his old clubs juniorized will be getting three sets of clubs for a little more than the price of one.

"The beauty of juniorizing," an Ohio pro suggested, "is that two kids can benefit. One can have the driver and the 3-wood and the other the 2- and 4-woods. The irons, too, can be divided with one kid taking the even-numbered clubs and the other the odd-numbered ones."

Timely Publicity Value

Professionals who collaborated with GOLFDOM's staff in devising the Pro-Juniorized plan are credited by a Detroit advertising executive and golf club official with presenting an unusually well-timed publicity theme for pro golf.

"The television revenue argument between tournament pros and sponsors hasn't made friends for pro golf," said this man. "Neither has the trouble the home pros have had in trying to find out where they stand in the PGA golf course deal in Florida."

"But now the club professionals come up with an idea that accents how indispensable they are to the solid growth and the future of golf. This Pro-Juniorized plan puts the spotlight on the club professional. It has to be rated a stroke of genius as a publicity and merchandising operation in marketing development."

Merchandising Dream

"If automobile makers and dealers could handle the used car problem by taking old cars off the market and using them to create a big juvenile market and educate tomorrow's customers," the Detroit executive continued, "that would be a merchandising dream beyond imagination."

"The golf business is lucky to have professionals who can conceive a Pro-Juniorized plan for making more and happy customers while curing their most serious marketing problem," the Detroit executive concluded.

Enthusiastic reception of the Pro-Juniorized idea and plans of professionals to push the campaign this spring, give assurance that an immense expansion of

the pro sales picture may be in the making.

An interesting sidelight of the Pro-Juniorized campaign is that it is expected to give a big boost to shop sales of new clubs for kids.

Accents Family Character

The family character of golf, which could stand more publicity, is bound to get increased attention as a result of a Pro-Juniorized club program. Many of the children in the 10-to-16-year age group who are at the club pool almost every summer day do not enter golf classes or play golf because they do not have clubs. Professionals are aware of this equipment shortage but often do not know how to tactfully bring the matter to the parents of the kids.

It has been the experience of many professionals that Junior schedules at committees get into the picture. Class lessons and one-hole, three-hole, and nine-hole competitions, as well as the practice green contests, make the kids eager to come to the club. With the Junior events coordinated by a women's committee, the professional and manager, a good deal of restaurant business is developed for the club, especially Thursday dinners.

Tournaments Prove Potential

Every year since the USGA boys' Junior amateur championship was started in 1950, the entry list has grown. Last year it was 2,230. The USGA Junior Girls' championship, since its start in 1950 with 18 entries, hasn't shown the same steady growth, but last year at Wolfert's Roost CC, Albany, N.Y., there was a record number of 138 applicants. So, it is evident that there is great potential in junior golf. But the kids need to be encouraged.

Older male members of clubs who fear that the kids might clutter up the course if they are turned loose, should be reminded that in the 1963 USGA boys' championship, Gregg McHatton of Whittier Calif., and Richard Brand of Tulsa, needed only one hour and 47 minutes in playing the final at Florence (S.C.) CC when McHatton beat Brand 4-and-3. The older fellows should hope to play at that rate.