



Gary Nixon

... he discovered a sales pickup.

## 'House of Nixon' A Sales Lift in

**A Closeout Special may have to get out from under a heavy found that a gimmick worked**

**W**hen Gary Nixon made a break from The Greenbrier and Sam Snead early in 1964 following a 15-year association with the two as an associate pro, and moved to Philmont CC in Huntington Valley, Pa., his immediate impression was that he should have made the switch to a head shopmaster's spot long before he did.

It wasn't that Nixon had been working on a rockpile in White Sulphur Springs. Quite the contrary. But within a few weeks after coming to Philmont and getting the shop stocked, Gary luxuriated in a flurry of spring sales that made him wonder if he hadn't discovered a new conduit leading from the nearby Philadelphia mint. A large percentage of Philmont's near 1,500 members (about 800 of whom play golf) it seemed, did their early season buying in the pro shop, and with gusto.

### Then It Tapered Off

Things like that, of course, don't go on forever. Within a few weeks after that initial burst, business became somewhat routine. By mid-June there was evidence that the summer doldrums at Philmont were going to be just as real as they are at almost any other club.

Nixon, who doesn't favor closeouts, sales or similar distress measures if they can

## Label Produces the Slack Season

helped Gary Nixon of Philmont inventory last summer, but he better in easing the situation

be avoided, huddled with his assistants, Buzz Garvin and Sam Baker, sometime around the fourth of July. "We need a gimmick," he told them. "Something besides a sale on which we won't make any money. We have to come up with some kind of a cute idea that will make people buy more golf goods from us."

The rack-room conference went on for a couple hours. Gary, Buzz and Sam put on the worried looks that denote deep



Buzz Garvin, assistant pro at Philmont, is seen with club display that is cleverly targeted with aid of a golf cap and head covers.

thinking. Finally, someone, it isn't clear who, said, "How about labeling our merchandise 'House of Nixon'? It might get some of the customers around here fired up."

### Tested on Members

Everyone agreed that a label such as this was worth a try. Mrs. Leon Rose, a Philmont member with an artistic touch who had been doing some poster work for Nixon for lockerrooms and lounge displays, drew up some tentative 'House of Nixon' labels. They were tested on a handful of members who decided that a simple, Gothic Italic lettered sample had the most eye appeal of those submitted. Shortly thereafter, signs bearing the legend, "House of Nixon Presents," were seen around the clubhouse. In the meantime, the Philmont pro arranged to have the labels attached to the sport shirts and sweaters that he ordered, along with having them imprinted on the plastic bags in which the sportswear was packaged. This year, he is expanding the idea to



Practice green, just outside Pro shop front door, is located in clubhouse offset. Directly behind it is the main dining room.



Dressing nook and sportswear display were installed in Philmont shop at the cost of only \$100.

take in as many items as can be conveniently labeled.

What was the reaction among the members of the Philadelphia club? It was good, if not smashing. Women, who account for nearly 70 per cent of the buying at Philmont, were impressed. Male members agreed that the label idea added class to the shop's method of presenting its merchandise.

#### Better Late Than Not at All

As for Gary Nixon, he says that the idea probably was introduced too late in the season to be fully exploited. "But it was a fine sales pickup," he points out. "August sales would have been a lot lower than they were if we hadn't had the label. It got people to talking about us, taking new notice of the pro shop. I'm sure that over a full season a simple gimmick such as the 'House of Nixon' label will make a big difference in our volume."

Since Nixon depends on 250 women players to provide more than two-thirds of his volume, he follows the lines of least resistance by playing up to the ladies. Shortly after he arrived on the Philmont scene last year, Gary staged a fashion show and luncheon for the feminine swingers.

He is convinced that there could have been a no more proper introduction because the entire club responded by nearly buying out his initial stock in its spring spending surge.

#### Fall Style Show

The Philmont pro didn't allow the women's interest to wane thereafter. Early in September, at a time when the ladies were showing signs of turning their backs on golf for the season, Nixon staged a Pro-Lady tournament that did much to renew enthusiasm. Then, a month later, he came back with a second fashion show and cocktail party that gave impetus to the sale of fall merchandise. So, that you don't get the impression that men are neglected at Philmont, they, too, were invited to the fall showing.

One of the first things Nixon did after coming to the Huntington Valley club was to borrow space from the sales room and build a dressing cubicle for the women at one end of the shop. It is finished in Philippine mahogany and is fronted by



Gary Nixon recommends "full house" look when it comes to displaying merchandise. Mirrors above small drawers in which golf gloves are stocked give illusion that shop is more fully stocked than it actually is.

racks and shelves on which shorts, slacks and shirts are displayed. It cost Nixon only \$100 to provide this convenience for the women who are spared a long trip to the lockerroom to try on clothing they may be interested in buying.

Playing up to the feminine trade and making extensive use of the newly discovered labels aren't the only sales devices that Nixon employs. The posters that Mrs. Rose draws for him do more than merely call attention to the pro shop. In most cases they carry a message. The members are informed through them of the latest styles that can be seen in the shop, or they may list some of the new merchandise that has been received. They are also used to advertise special sales.

These things are fine adjuncts to making pro shop sales, Nixon says, but what really spells success in a shop operation is carrying a complete inventory from the beginning of the season until the end. It may be a throwback to the many years that Gary spent at a resort club, but he contends that nothing sells merchandise like having it displayed. He is in complete accord with Pat Mahoney, the Palo Alto, Calif. pro, who believes in returning part of his profits to the business in order to expand the stock.

"If you don't keep up your inventory toward the end of the season," Nixon says, "you should at least try to give the impression that you do. Bare spots on the shelves look twice as vacant to the customer as they do to you. He thinks you are folding up for the season when he sees them. A good merchandiser will keep enough balls, socks, head covers, caps, etc. on hand to fill them in. He can always get rid of this merchandise."

The Philmont accounting office handles the pro shop billing and accounting and Nixon hires an auditor to periodically check his books. Yet, every Sunday evening he prepares an income statement and balances it against a tentative expense statement. His reasoning is that the pro who waits for the club accounting department or his auditor to give him a periodic profit and loss summary is out of touch with his business. He should know from week to week, if not to the last dollar, the approximate condition of his business.

## Color Instructional Golf Film Available

A full-color instructional film, *Winning Golf*, has been released by the National Collegiate Film Service, 1030 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago, Ill. The movie presents the teaching techniques of Robert H. (Bob) Kepler, coach of the Ohio State's golf team and chairman of the NCAA golf tournament committee.

Included in illustrating the proper golf form are two of Kepler's former NCAA



Bob Kepler, Ohio State golf coach, Jack Nicklaus and William J. Ganz, producer of *Winning Golf*, discuss National Collegiate golf movie.

champions, Tom Nieporte and Jack Nicklaus. A two-time NCAA champion who presents the do's and don'ts in the 35-minute MacGregor-sponsored film is Dick Crawford, who captured the collegiate title in 1959 and repeated in 1960. Kepler also called upon present varsity stars and recent Buckeye alumni such as Mike Podolsky and Tom Weiskopf to help in making the movie.

Chris Schenkel, TV golf announcer, narrates the film showing the Kepler analytical techniques. They include the grip and stance right on through the various fundamentals of the swing.

*Winning Golf* includes a substantial amount of slow motion to enable viewers to grasp every movement of the swing. Trouble shots, such as sand trap play — both from buried and set-up lies — right through sidehill, downhill and uphill lies are also shown.