

WHY THE PRO LAGS IN GOLF CLUB SALES

Clubs are still the bread and butter items . . . But they aren't carrying their weight because pros aren't selling their quality

By **GEORGE DAWSON**

A. G. Spalding & Bros., Inc.

There has been a steady and substantial increase in the number of golfers, golf courses and rounds played for the past 10 years.

But the increase in the number of clubs sold has not kept pace with the market's progress. When the professional studies the situation and notes the rise in sales of golf clothing, he begins to wonder if the soft goods and footwear increase has not been due to accent in display and sales attention, or is simply a normal development that results from apparel wearing out much faster than the clubs and bags.

Then, he is bound to realize that the better he does in club sales, the better he does in every other item of pro shop merchandise. Club sales are still the basic item. *The more interest there is in playing golf, the more of everything that will be sold.* And, certainly more golf is played with newer clubs. It's better golf, too. Any professional who is not familiar with the how and why of improvements in club design and construction should arouse himself. He can improve his earnings considerably by knowing what he has to sell.

Begin Chain Selling

When a professional looks at the clubs stored in his racks and compares their "tired" look with the fresh look of the golf clothing worn by the owners of the badly worn clubs, it must be obvious to him that there has to be more of a balance in his selling efforts. These two classes of merchandise for golfers should supplement each other and not compete with each other for the golfer's dollar.

The golfer who buys a fine shirt, sweat-

er or slacks in his pro shop surely intends to play golf. Since his golf clubs comprise the most important part of his equipment their sales should not lag.

Too many golfers who wouldn't go on the course unless dressed in the latest styles give very little thought to the fact that their clubs do not reflect the latest refinements and improved playing qualities. Modern research and study of shafts, balance, proper weight distribution and feel has made possible the production of golf clubs which result in more effective and more enjoyable golf for all golfers.

New modern clubs, alone, will not lift a golfer from the duffer to the expert class. However, new modern clubs, properly fitted by a golf professional, plus lessons, will improve the scores and enjoyment of most golfers.

Not Properly Sold

Many golfers are using obsolete clubs, not because they can't afford new ones or because they don't care about their scores. *Too many of these players just haven't been properly sold.* No one has taken the time and effort to point out to them that there is a big difference in clubs — that the new improved models can unquestionably make the game easier, more interesting for them.

No amount of advertising alone will convince a man he needs new clubs as thoroughly as a professional can by a short, personal discussion of his game and a brief demonstration. The professional has the golfer in his shop. The practice tee is within easy access. If new, properly fitted clubs are put into the player's hands, with a few well chosen words telling the advantages they offer, the seed has been sown, the sale at least has been started.

Since the golfer can most easily be sold a new set of top grade clubs when he has been made aware of all of the latest refinements and improved playing qualities embodied in a particular set, the complete selling job can be accomplished only when the professional himself knows all the answers.

When a professional invests his money in an inventory of fine golf clubs, he



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. . . golfers aren't being sold.

should take the trouble to learn all he can about the quality of the various sets he displays. The manufacturers' salesmen who call on him know these answers and will gladly share their knowledge with their pro customer.

An important element in golf club selling, which has retarded progress in the pro shops, seems to be the lack of proper stocking and displaying of the latest club models.

Has to Have Variety

If a golf professional attempted to sell sport shirts and stocked only one style, color and size he could hardly expect to make many sales. So, too, it is difficult to sell a man a set of clubs when only one or two sets are in stock. Even if that set may have been "built" for the customer,

he will want to compare and choose from other sets. It is conceded that it is difficult to carry a very large line of top grade clubs because of the large investment involved, but with proper knowledge of his members and his sales potential, the professional can stock a proper variety of clubs to enable him to make sales to any of his members.

In many golf shops today, clubs are displayed on racks that are completely hidden by sweaters, shirts, hats, etc. A man is often discouraged from looking over the clubs because he is forced to fight his way through hundreds of other items to see them. If he were constantly tempted, by sight of the newest playing equipment on the market, the club selling job would certainly be easier for the professionals.

Women Vie for More Money on Ladies PGA Circuit

The Ladies PGA, according to Leonard F. Wirtz, tournament manager, may exceed its 1965 goal of \$360,000 in prize purses by approximately \$15,000. Through August, the women's circuit will post a total of \$233,000 in prize money, an increase of about \$43,000 over a comparable time in 1964.

The July-August Ladies PGA schedule includes seven official and one unofficial events, with \$87,500 riding in these two months. New tournaments in this period are the \$10,000 Buckeye Savings Invitation, to be played at Cloverbrook in Cincinnati; the \$5,000 Hospital Charity Pro-Am, to be played at Oak Park (Ill.) CC on Aug. 9; and the \$10,000 Lady Carling Midwest Open, which replaces the Lady Carling Eastern Open. It will be played at Walnut Hills in Columbus, O.

The Yankee Women's Open, to be played July 16-18 at Atlas Valley GC, Grand Blanc, Mich. has increased its purse from \$10,000 to \$15,000. The purse for the Omaha Jaycee Open (Aug. 20-22) is being increased by \$1,000 to \$10,000.

Golf club membership, says the USGA, is not limited to wealthy persons. About 90 per cent of private clubs have annual dues of less than \$500 per family membership.