
Pro-quality again protects market . . .

Pro grade balls — 54% unit volume; 72% revenue

Pro grade woods — 30% unit volume; 50% revenue

Pro grade irons — 28% unit volume; 50% revenue

1964 Golf Sales Account For 50 Per Cent of Sports Market

Golf again is the big leader in sales of athletic and sporting goods, as reported in the Athletic Goods Manufacturers Association's *Census Report for 1964*.

On the basis of manufacturers' selling prices, including federal excise tax, 1964 sales amounted to:

Golf equipment	\$128,249,046
Baseball and Softball equipment	35,565,847
Athletic shoes	25,266,440
Inflated goods	22,673,311
Miscellaneous items	14,113,014
Athletic clothing	9,220,848
Tennis, badminton and related equipment	8,805,686
Helmets and pads	5,977,762
Boxing gloves	233,241
Bowling bags	149,268
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	\$250,254,463

Although the report shows golf accounts for 51 per cent of the "athletic and sporting goods" total, actually golf's part of the market is much greater as golf shoes and golf apparel are virtually omitted in the compilation. Any figures on the golf apparel market would be the wildest sort of a guess. Annual sales of golf shoes would be pretty much of a guess, too, especially since so many cheaper shoes have come into the market. They haven't hurt pro shop sales of quality shoes, which show a steady and substantial increase at first class shops.

The Census Report also misses the complete story by not figuring in the

sales of manufacturers who account for possibly 20 per cent of the U.S. golf ball production and somewhere between 5 and 10 per cent of U.S. golf club production.

Imports Not Included

In another respect the Census Report cannot be analyzed and compared with previous years. Reporting for 1964, the cooperating manufacturers do not tell how much imported merchandise they sold in the United States. Previously imported goods were included.

With the selling price of the imported merchandise omitted, the 1964 total reported was \$1,243,332 less than in the previous year. Much of that statistical slump was in baseball gloves made in Japan, and in tennis equipment made in Europe and Pakistan. In 1964, 409,047 dozen golf balls were imported into the U.S. from Britain and Japan, according to government figures. This was an increase of about 35 per cent over the previous year.

Low Prices Confuse Pros

In 1964, the Census reports 6,145,199 dozen balls made in the U.S. That is 450,850 dozen more than were shown on the previous year's report, which included imports. The value of the American-made balls in 1964 was \$43,473,126. The average value was \$7.07 a dozen, down 11 cents from the 1963 figure.

Why the average price of American-made golf balls should fall, although most other sporting goods prices have increased, puzzles and threatens pros. They think they ought to have fullest cooperation of

manufacturers in preserving the market for quality golf goods. The pros' concern is shared by some manufacturers who don't want the golf ball business to follow the cheap baseball glove business to Japanese factories.

Cheap golf balls are being poured into the market as advertising gifts and are adding to the conglomeration of items in stores specializing in the cheapest sort of merchandise. These retailing outlets aren't directly competing with pros as the pro standard of golf goods values attracts a better class of customers. But where cheap stuff is harming the pro cause, say club professionals, is in featuring low grade balls bearing the names of prominent professionals who don't play the balls bearing their names. This misleading advertising cheapens the entire pro business picture.

Hard to Figure This One

PGA members were shocked recently when a telecast of a tournament authorized by the PGA carried advertising of a \$3.98 putter, a \$1.98 golf umbrella and three golf balls for \$1.33 as the bait for a chain of tire stores. The implied endorsement of low grade merchandise by the PGA, and the use of PGA co-sponsored tournament publicity to get golfers away from pro shop buying and into tire stores for golf goods, has professionals burning.

The case has been embarrassing all around. The network that hooked the PGA into apparently plugging the cheap grade of golf goods needs to do a lot of explaining. The tire company that associated itself with the low quality goods has lost friends and boosters among pros and golfers who feel it is wise to buy good quality tires as well as good quality golf goods.

Pro Quality Makes Market

The 1964 ball figures show that the pro shop type of balls (of average value of \$8.96 a doz., per Census report) accounted for 3,361,503 dozen of the 6,145,199 dozen total sold. The pro quality balls sold for \$30,113,034 of the total ball sales of \$43,473,126.

What these figures prove is that pro quality sales amount to only about 54 per cent of the American golf ball volume, but account for near 72 per cent of the

USGA Says Some Balls Don't Conform to Rules

USGA has indicated that substantial numbers of five brands of golf balls fail to conform with the velocity regulation in Rule 2-3 of the Rules of Golf. Use of all balls of these brands is thus prohibited because balls may be tested for velocity only on the USGA apparatus.

Rule 2-3 provides in part that the velocity of the ball shall not exceed 250 feet per second when measured on the USGA apparatus, with a maximum tolerance of 2 per cent. The balls in question exceed the tolerance as well as the basic limit.

Maximum Weight Involved

In addition, substantial numbers of three brands do not conform with the provision in Rule 2-3 limiting the maximum weight of the ball to 1.620 ounces avoirdupois. Two of these brands also fail the velocity requirement and may not be used under any circumstances. Any individual ball of the brands which have failed only to meet the weight regulation may be used if it can be proved that its weight does not exceed 1.620 ounces.

Notification of the findings were made to officials in charge of the local qualifying rounds for the U.S. Open and the PGA.

Amateur golf associations also are being notified of the breaches of the golf ball rules.

manufacturers' ball sales revenue. There are 18 pro-only golf balls on the market.

It doesn't take any marketing genius to see why the health of the pro golf ball market is essential to golf goods manufacturers.

Club Market Up Slightly

For 1964, there were 10,731,574 clubs reported at a total factory selling cost, including federal excise tax, of \$70,439,099. The average value was \$6.56.

Very few clubs were imported into the United States so the 1963 sales of 10,000,279 and the 1964 sales probably give a nearly accurate comparative picture. With

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Golf Sales Lead

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the 1964 increase of 731,295 clubs over 1963 there was an increase of 5 cents in average value per club.

A total of 7,649,060 irons were reported sold in 1964 at an average value of \$5.78 against 1963 figures of 7,140,396 and \$5.69.

In 1964 there were 3,082,514 woods sold for a total of \$26,225,771 and an average of \$8.51.

Basis of Good Business

Again the pro quality is the basis of profitable golf business. Of 7,649,060 irons sold, the pro-quality numbered 2,189,866 and had an average factory price of \$10.02. These top quality clubs, although only about 28 per cent of the unit volume, were about 50 per cent of the dollar volume.

Pro-quality woods, which averaged \$14.11 at the factory price, accounted for 924,998 sold and a total of \$13,051,285.

The pro grade of woods run to about 30 per cent of total sales units and ac-

count for practically 50 per cent of wood sales in dollars figured at factory prices. From all these figures you can understand why there are 25 pro-only brands of golf clubs.

Cheap Line Bags

The 1964 report shows 863,492 golf bags selling for a total of \$10,086,682 and an average value of \$11.68. Obviously the large part of bag volume is in the cheap lines. Pro-quality sales (classified as \$24.01 and over, at factory) account for 74,225 bags and \$3,030,188, with an average of \$40.81. Approximately the 9 per cent of pro-quality bag production accounted for one-third of factory sales income.

Golf cart factory sales for 1964 were reported as 172,174 as against 1963 sales of 218,792 carts. Imported carts sold well in the United States last year. Cart sales for 1964 were reported as \$2,774,725, an average value of \$16.12 against the previous year's average of \$15.71.

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