



Anyone who has seen Tommy Card's club display at Carolina CC in Raleigh gives it at least a Triple A rating. Card worked and re-worked this corner of the shop to get the effect he wanted when his sales-room was remodelled. (Inset) Here's another eye-catcher. Bags, shoes, shirts, head-covers and occasionally miscellaneous items are displayed just opposite corner in which cash register and ball counter are located. What helps to attract attention here are framed wash drawings of golf scenes.



Take a Tip from Tommy Card

Reclaiming Storage Business First Step in Bringing Shop Back

If you are thinking of attempting to bring back a shop that has been allowed to run down, don't undertake it unless you are overly endowed with patience and endurance, and have sufficient finances to take care of the rent and grocery bill for at least two years. And, don't think that your mere smiling and alert presence in the shop, and eagerness to give the very best in service, is going to automatically influence fallen away members to make an about face and come back with their check books in hand. Some will hold out for a long time.

In a situation where the shop's service has deteriorated, the new professional starts with what amounts to a pair of putts against him. He is faced with the problem of not only re-locating customers, but once having found them, persuading them that things are going to be improved. That isn't easy.

Picture Not Encouraging

You have the word of Tommy Card, professional at Carolina CC, for this. When he came to the Raleigh, N.C. club early in 1962, he found that no more than 75 of more than 500 golf playing members were keeping their clubs in the shop racks. Actual sales based on what Card thought the potential should have been, were in about the same proportion as the club storage patronage. He was to discover that if players store their golfing gear elsewhere, they buy elsewhere.

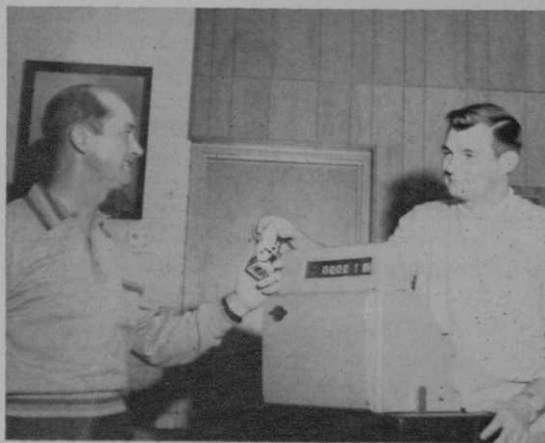
It was a discouraging picture, but Card, a native of Raleigh who was anxious to come back home after spending the previous seven years at clubs in the Cleveland, O. district, decided he was enough of a plugger to change it.

And, plugging was what it took.

In his first year on the job, Card buttonholed something like 400 male players and nearly 100 women and listened not only to their complaints about the shop, but solicited their suggestions for

improving it. Most agreed that everyone around the club would feel better if the shop were remodeled, both inside and out. The Carolina CC pro quietly encouraged the members to continue thinking this way and repeat this opinion. Before 1962 was out, the pro shop was completely made over. Glassed in on one side, and with a spruce panelled and off-white brick interior, the new shop is as impressive as any to be seen in the Mid-South.

Card's opinion sampling produced overwhelming evidence that members had become disgruntled simply because the previous proprietor of the shop had not kept it adequately stocked and, at the same



Tommy Card (l) had aid of top assistant, Ron Reitz, in getting straightened away at Carolina CC.

time, had permitted his service to slip. The breakdown in service was resented more than the fact that stock was allowed to fall off.

"To be fair to the fellow," says Card, "he didn't have the best facilities in the world to work with. Then, he got interested in another enterprise, and trying to keep two things going at the same time was just too much for him."

With remodeling going on in 1962, Tommy Card could only proceed as fast



Popular Display Creations rack (l) is centerpiece around which Card designed the entire Raleigh shop. (Right) One side of shop is glassed in, serves as backdrop for cap and hat and shoe display.

as space, in which to display equipment and apparel, was made available to him. But by early fall of that year, when the shop was completed, he had built his inventory up to a \$25,000 value and since then it hasn't been allowed to drop much below that figure.

Bringing in a large stock, however, didn't mean success was assured for the Carolina CC shopmaster. It was to take another year, at least, before enough members resumed patronizing the shop to make it a going operation.

Came Back Gradually

"We had to get the club storage business back — or part of the way back — before we could start making money," says Card. "By the end of 1962 I probably had 125 people keeping their clubs in the new racks. I picked up another 75 or 80 in 1963. It should have been more but players who turn away often are slow in coming back. Last year I got another 75 to resume using the cleaning and storage service.

"Maybe 200 is the break-even figure," Card continues. "Whatever it is, I have found out in the last three years that if your golfers carry their clubs around in the trunks of their cars, they are going to buy their equipment and apparel elsewhere. You have to have them coming into the shop and ordering their clubs sent

out to the first tee or you're not going to make it in the pro business."

The storage and cleaning charge at Carolina CC is \$18 per year. Card estimates that it takes the equivalent of one and one-half men to run the rack room during the playing season, which runs to 10 solid months in the Raleigh area, and that he does a little better than break even on the service. But he wouldn't think of increasing storage rates at this time, even if he lost money on them, because the success of his business is so closely tied in with the club service. Then, too, he is still shooting for at least another 100 rack patrons.

Card Designed New Shop

Carolina CC's remodeled shop was designed by Card, who used the familiar Display Creations centerpiece and fashioned his sales room around it. Ten circular, recessed ceiling lamps give an evenly distributed lighting effect to the entire shop while there is a single spot trained on the unusually excellent club and bag display. The walls are panelled for the most part in mahogany-stained spruce with occasional breaks of off-white brick. A two-tone tan carpet extends from wall to wall.

During his three years at the Raleigh club, Card has confined his activities almost entirely to the inside of the shop.

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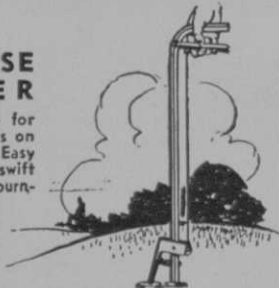
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Reclaiming Shop Business

(Continued from page 54)

"When the remodeling was going on," he says, "I found that I just couldn't break away. During this time I constantly kept changing the shop layout and I became more fascinated than ever with the many facets of display and merchandising. I must have tinkered with that club and bag setup for two months before I was satisfied with the way it looked.

"And during this time and for two years thereafter," Card adds, "I thought it expedient to go on doing my missionary work among the members. They had to be reconverted or I was going to have to look for a new spot."

Where Assistant Comes In

Caught up in tasks such as these, a pro can chase around in circles for 16 hours a day, seven days a week, and still end up without coming close to doing what he has set out to do. This is where a topgrade assistant has to come in to spell the professional. Card has one in Ron Reitz, who was with him at Hawthorne Valley in Cleveland. Reitz not only has a flair for merchandising, but is an accomplished instructor. He handles approximately 80 per cent of the teaching assignments at Carolina CC and directs a Junior program that Card contends is the equal of anything to be found in the Carolinas. Reitz also coaches the St. Marys College women's golf team and conducts classes during the winter months at a Raleigh YMCA.

Running a pro shop, according to Card, doesn't stop with providing the best in service and a complete stock of merchandise that is displayed in a way that many members at Carolina CC and beyond describe as dazzling. "You have to sell the stuff after you get it," Card states flatly. So, this calls for some attention to salesmanship, because in the Raleigh pro's estimation, hardly a single piece of merchandise goes over the counter or off the racks unless someone figures out a way to sell it.

Salesmanship, Card remarks, consists for the most part in knowing the customers, what they will buy and when it takes

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that little push to get them to reach into their billfolds.

"The assistant pro, myself and my wife, who oversees the bookkeeping, does some buying and handles women sales, get together every week for a sales conference," says Card. "It's something that is rarely cancelled or postponed. We do some talking behind the golfers' backs because it is important for all of us to know just how different people react. Some of our members are browsers who resent suggestions from us; others are waiting for us to sell them something. It's important for a pro sales staff to get together frequently and decide which of the two classifications different players fall into. It's all a part of what I call alert merchandising. We need plenty of this in our business."

Western Golf Association has cut handicap requirements by two strokes to 73 for its 63rd Western Amateur. This was done so that this year's field will not be too large. The tournament will be played July 28-Aug. 1 at Point O' Woods CC, Benton Harbor, Mich.

Where Ingenuity Counts

(Continued from page 46)

customer alike are the 18 foot counter for sales transactions, blue-green nylon carpeting and nine tinted windows for easy viewing on incoming and outgoing holes.

Stripped-In Alarm

Each window is lined with strips of aluminum foil, which when broken, sets off a burglar alarm at the police station.

The old pro shop, built in 1926, was a 25 x 21-foot closet which may have been adequate in that early era. The outside was constructed of unsightly red brick.

When plans for the new shop were discussed, it was decided to tear down the wall at one end of the old building and add 26 additional feet. The outside brick was removed and replaced with modern looking, rough sawed vertical Cedar siding.

The Madison shop is one of four new ones built within the last five years by the Peoria park system.