

The Golf Business OUTLOOK

Green Light on improvements

President Johnson's request for the restoration of excise taxes on autos and phone calls, as stated in his budget message last month, left golf people breathing easier after a shaky interval in which they had been disturbed by rumors. GOLFDOM's Washington sources indicate there is no plan to resurrect the 20 per cent excise tax on club dues. The nation's golf clubs now are happily proceeding with plans for improvements, based on last year's announced rescinding of the tax as of Jan. 1, 1966. A survey in the October-November issue of GOLFDOM showed that 64.1 per cent of 800 club presidents, managers and course operators were making plans to raise dues to include the money formerly paid as tax. Since 13 per cent of those who received questionnaires reported that they had not reached a decision at the time, the percentage of those capitalizing on the windfall with club improvements is now probably higher.

Golf hustlers' wings clipped?

The Chicago District Golf Association recently took a step that may well give that hardy perennial breed—the golf hustler—food for thought. It is inviting inquiry about the handicap history of any member of a CDGA club. James L. O'Keefe, president, and Charles N. Eckstein, handicap chairman and custodian of the handicap records of 25,000 members, are suggesting that golf associations and clubs investigate the handicaps of golfers playing in their areas—particularly the resort areas. They are also urging that associations establish a practice, as a matter of policy, of investigating handicaps of all entries in every amateur, pro-amateur and senior tournament to protect conscientious golfers, who number the majority, from the false or erratic handicaps of a very small minority. Peripatetic handicaps are instantly spotlighted under the CDGA handicap system, which has been recorded by machine since 1959. Handicap information will be supplied immediately upon receipt of a telephone call or letter.

Sporting goods sales to top \$3 billion in '66

Consumer sales in the steadily growing sporting goods market should go over the \$3 billion mark in 1966, in the opinion of Richard Snyder, economist for the National Sporting Goods Association. He predicts sales of \$3,032,700,000, an increase of 5.8 per cent over 1965 figures. The industry achieved the \$2 billion plateau in 1960, and passed the \$1 billion mark in 1947. Sporting goods sales have accounted for an average of about 10.5% of the recreation dollar since 1947. Snyder sees manifestations of "trend leveling" in product sales, reflecting a definite tendency of the sporting goods business to be less cyclical in recent years. Four categories of sporting goods have sales in excess of \$200 million—golf equipment, pleasure boats and equipment, firearms and supplies, and bicycles.

Skirts show staying power

For the female golfer—skirts and culottes are in most major golfwear manufacturers' lines, and are increasing in popularity. More women can gracefully hide in a wraparound or A-line skirt than can in figure fitting slacks—and look more feminine at the same time. For more on skirts, see Joyce Haklar's Golfwear Pipeline on page 50, and Around the Fashion Course on page 58.