



Golf Shows—win or place?

Manufacturers of playing, maintenance equipment weigh results, rate New England PGA highly.

Manufacturers of golf playing and maintenance equipment and pros and golf course superintendents with sound general business knowledge have been looking over the many PGA and GCSAA sectional "shows" and appraising these affairs as selling operations on the basis of profit or loss.

If the sectional shows are profitable to the manufacturers and warrant assigning salesmen and other staff men to the displays and demonstrations, then they've got a place in golf business. If they're not definitely profitable (and interfere with other profitable sales operations) they simply add to the selling price of the merchandise and, in the long run, the club department heads pay their share of that useless cost.

In the case of golf club manufacturers, financing and production schedules determine the timing of the most effective displays of the new lines. The hard realism of club selling is that the market's most influential and largest-buying

pros place their orders in the fall and set the pattern that the pros who buy less will follow. If it were not for that practice by the big-buying pros, the pro business would lose one important aspect of its attractiveness to the manufacturers.

The successful businessmen—pros know this and fit the knowledge into the program arrangements for the PGA winter merchandise show at the PGA National course, which is mainly an apparel and accessory presentation with the fundamental equipment playing a minor part. In this way conflict between the PGA Show at Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., headquarters and the sectional shows is, to an extent, minimized.

The GCSAA annual show, which holds an "Educational Conference" to encourage attendance, has been a major factor in the financing of the organization since the late Fred Burkhardt, a GCSAA founder, visualized what could be done by an equipment show in developing the association's income. The show has

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become a useful shopping center with the sectional GCSAA affairs serving as demonstration areas at which park officials, course owners and club officials get a close-up of what their superintendents want them to buy.

The superintendents and pros have used good judgment in keeping their shows free from the implication or application of pressure selling of space used by promoters who make golf tournament program advertising an operation practically on the ethical level of a Cosa Nostra campaign.

Golf playing equipment makers usually regard the PGA New England Section show as the one that pays off. In recent years, with more and more sectional shows competing, the New England show, under the direction of the section's president John E. Boda, Sr. (pro at Andover, Mass., CC), continues to improve.

Boda tells about the annual operation: "Our New England Show has been

continuous for 32 years and I'm sure today it is better than ever. I have always put a great deal of time and effort into this project. The choice of exhibitors is very important. I mean, select merchandisers who do business only through pro shops and with good business reputation.

"In allotting spaces, I try to use common sense by separating dealers of the same type of merchandise so that the professionals may feel at liberty to buy the merchandise from the exhibitor of his choice without causing any embarrassment to either party.

"The Hotel Statler Hilton has been most cooperative and has made it possible to allow the exhibitors to set up in the afternoon and evening previous to the day of the show at no extra cost. This is most important as you may well know the traffic problem is serious on Monday mornings.

"We try to inform our exhibitors of storage warehouses for their shipments and make sure that elevator service and bell hops are available for the exhibitors.

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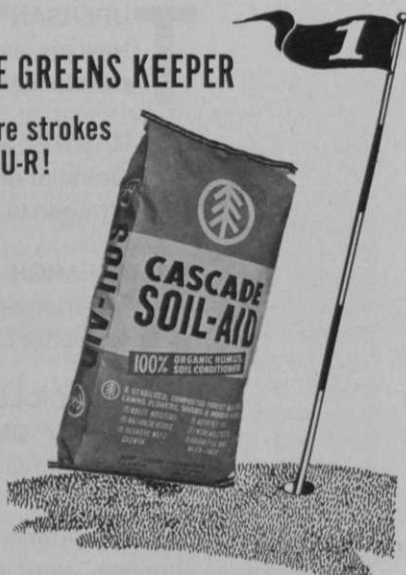
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"All exhibitors and their staff members are supplied with name tags for identification purposes. Exhibitors are asked to quote wholesale prices *ONLY* to professionals with proper identification that we furnish. There is absolutely no selling to the public. Exhibitors are allowed to sell to members of a club but all shipments and billings go directly to the members' club professionals.

"The date of our show has always been the day after the Masters Tournament, the first week in April, which seemed to be all right but as you know, the Masters has gone one week later the past two years. The change has not caused any problems, but may prove to be a bit late in the future.

"The exhibitors are charged \$50.00 per space and size of spaces is approximately 3' by 12' or 36 square feet, which is exceptionally low for space in this hotel.

We had 65 exhibitors this spring and many more applied for space but for one reason or another they were not accepted. It is not our aim to make a lot of money on the show. Our intent is to run as good a merchandise show as possible at a price reasonable to all.

"We have 270 members and from past experience we have averaged about 200 members attending the show plus members from the Connecticut and Northeast New York sections. I would also estimate that about 1,500 to 2,000 amateurs come in to see the display. There is no charge and the exhibit rooms open at 10 a.m. and close at 6 p.m.

"We have a dinner at 7 p.m. which is attended by an average of 650 people and we have been fortunate enough to engage all the big names in golf as our guest speakers. Although we have many head table guests, they are allowed a maximum of 3 minutes (with the exception of the guest speaker) and the program is over by about 10:30 p.m. This format has been exceptionally well received by all who attend the dinner." •

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