



Over 40 years a professional

Spencer Murphy has seen the shop develop from a clubmaking and repair setup to a complete "service station" for golfers.

By HERB GRAFFIS

This is the fortieth year of Spencer Murphy as professional at the Glen Oaks Club in the Long Island sector of New York's metropolitan district.

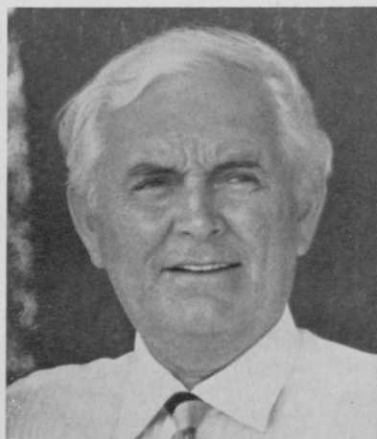
The canny, debonair Murphy is a leader in his field, with the looks and manner of a Roman statesman who carries enough votes to swing an election for Caesar. He is a substantially successful golf pro businessman who reflects his members' business status. Glen Oaks has a high percentage of nationally known executives and professional men who are strong for the high old standard of club atmosphere, facilities and operation. Men of this type appreciate that top quality costs more and is worth it. They can afford it. Hence guests at Glen Oaks get VIP treatment as the standard operating procedure.

One tip-off to the background of this distinction in service is in the fact that Murphy owns and operates the 62 cars that give Glen Oaks members and guests promptly supplied, thoroughly convenient, neat and reliable golf car utility. Golf car service of the highest grade requires more expense and trained, conscientious attention than the golfer or his club official generally realizes.

The cold truth is that the golf car operation isn't going to solve the financial problems of private club operation any more than bar operation has, with a much heavier traffic and much longer profit than the car service.

Businesslike Look at Prestige

The profit motive is very much a factor in operation of a prestige club.



The pro's business future depends, Murphy says, on the propaganda and education work with women golfers.

The job has got to be better to attract the better man to golf club work. Just as the profit motive accounts for people making enough to afford membership in first class private clubs, that same motive accounts for getting the people who know how to run clubs, with the high standard of pro department operation that Murphy and his staff provide at Glen Oaks.

A club member told Murphy: "My father didn't join a club because he wanted to run a golf business. That certainly wasn't my reason for joining. I know how my own business must be run to make me more happy customers and more money and I expect you to know how to run your business and

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make a profit while you're taking good care of me."

Hundreds of pros would pray for members of that understanding.

Sees Tomorrow in Yesterday

Murphy has seen golf grow from simply a sport into a big sport business in the New York Metropolitan district. He was born in New York City and became a caddie at Hartsdale GC, N.Y., when Alex Finley was pro there. Being an ambitious kid with an organizing mind, he quickly graduated into caddiemaster.

Now, says Murphy, the caddiemaster and the caddie are vanishing Americans with the golf car rapidly replacing them. In a few years caddies will be rare at clubs in larger city areas, Murphy believes. That will mean club professionals and their officials will have to give considerable attention to junior golf programs to develop new crops of members. The high schools and colleges are doing a pretty fair job in developing these replacements but, in Murphy's opinion, their campaigns are not as vigorous and as effective as when the kids themselves earned money while acquiring the golf bug.

"You've got to think of what yesterday's kids did to make golf big today and in some manner—and quickly—



Back in 1932, Murphy was already known as a first-rate merchandiser. He introduced two free services: members' ball racks, and wooden tees.

accent getting kids into golf. The school-municipal course tie-ups must be increased. The daily fee courses that are now getting about all the adult play they can handle and are renting golf cars instead of supplying caddies, can't be regarded as a significant factor in junior golf promotion."

When Jimmy Donaldson came from Glen View in suburban Chicago to be Fenimore's pro, Murphy became his assistant. Jimmy was a dapper fellow and the sartorial model of many younger pros; Walter Hagen as well as Murphy. Spencer looks back and wonders why, with Donaldson, then golf's glass of fashion and mold of form, pro shops didn't sell apparel. Bench-made clubs and balls were the stock.

In the winter, Murphy went with

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Spencer Murphy's well arranged shop exemplifies his philosophy of anticipating his members' golfing needs. Note the neat, attractive, well-lit display with plenty of room to browse.



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that grand old gentleman Charley Thom from Shinnecock Hills to winter work at Coral Gables, Fla. The next step for Murphy was as assistant to Willie Macfarlane at Oak Ridge. He was with Willie in 1925 when Macfarlane won the National Open after a play-off with Bob Jones and after two years as Macfarlane's assistant got the call to go to Glen Oaks and succeed Leo Diegel.

Learns Value of Assistants

Murphy says one of the first things he learned about pro business was that a pro was expected to be everywhere and take care of everybody at the same time, and the only way that he could come near to achieving that impossibility was to have competent, eager and resourceful assistants who were good stand-ins for him. Murphy, so old bosses have told this writer, was the perfect assistant. He made money for them and kept the members happy. He's had some able assistants himself—Ed Murphy, Jack Cuttle, Frank McGuiness, Tom Nieporte,

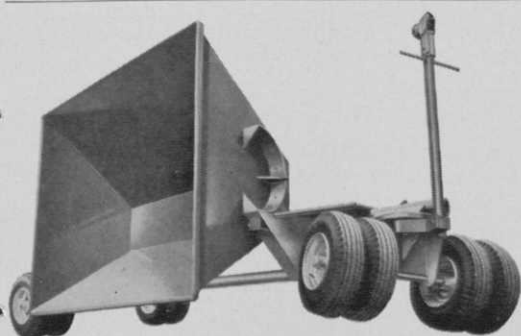
Pete Burke, Bill Collins, Jay Hebert, Lloyd Wadkins and Ray Hayden, among others.

When Murphy was an assistant, Spalding, St. Mungo and Colonel balls and a couple of others were the pro shop ball stock range. Spalding, MacGregor and Burke clubs as the factory lines were about the list with Bristol and Kroydon coming in for a little when the steel shaft looked like it was going to be here to stay.

Murphy and the other assistants then were careful and rather expert club fitters. They'd learned by making the clubs to order. Murphy early got accustomed to having members take out new clubs for trial. He learned not to consider clubs sold unless he saw they were fitted to the buyers' games. The policy was easier, in some ways, to maintain when the pro and his assistants could alter shafts or heads of individual clubs and sales of irons or woods by sets weren't the usual thing.

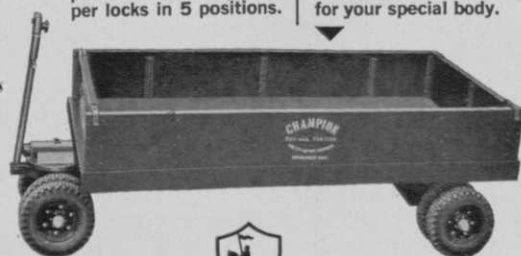
The clubmaking and fitting work gave assistants useful information to apply as they developed as teachers, Murphy

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noted. Training assistants in teaching is an exacting task that Murphy believes never can be stressed too much. He thinks some lads have an aptitude for teaching and can observe keenly, visualize, analyze and express themselves in establishing empathy between instructor and student. Others just simply haven't the qualities that get pupils learning.

It often took a lot of time, practice and skill to alter clubs so they were satisfactory to the conscientious artist who sold them and to the user. However, Spencer reflects that time didn't mean too much to a fellow who started to work caddy when it meant a 5½ mile walk to and from his home to Hartsdale GC at Scarsdale, N. Y. Alex Finley, who died recently, was pro there. The caddies got 30 cents a round and a dime tip, and an extra nickle for cleaning clubs with a bit of emery cloth.

There was no club storage at clubs then. This feature which is a basic source of revenue in most pro employment arrangements was introduced by C. M. Fox about 1914 when he was pro at Oak Ridge. The service worked so well that after World War I it became general at the better clubs in the New York metropolitan district and by 1922 it was customary throughout the country. Murphy recalls that when he was with Willie Macfarlane at Oak Ridge the club cleaning and storage charge was 75 cents per bag of clubs a month.

Pro Shop Merchandising Starts

Murphy's golf career was interrupted by 31 months in the Navy during World War I; most of the time at sea or overseas. If there were any golf courses at naval installations then, Spencer didn't hear of them.

When he got back into golf Murphy saw a golf boom dawning and newcomers needing buying and use guidance not only in clubs, balls and bags but in shoes and apparel. The pro shop grew out of being a club-making and repair shop and a ball sales source into a golfers' service station, advisory center, store, clubhouse branch, starting point, scoring and handicap information—and everything else that could con-

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tribute to the members' enjoyment and golf convenience and education.

Murphy introduced two free services that have been widely copied. One was the golf ball rack for members. Each member's golf balls were personalised with the Fulname marker stamping. Members bought a dozen balls at a time. When stock in the ball rack was low Spencer or an assistant called the shortening stock to the member's attention. Another dozen was ordered, name-stamped and stocked.

With the rough of those days more balls were lost and the game called for greater skill and precision in keeping the ball in play than now is required in tournament play, Murphy points out.

Murphy at Glen Oaks was the first one to supply the original wooden tee, the Reddy, free to members. This was very smart, profitable advertising for Murphy. His members talked about it and with Hagen and Kirkwood, who had promotion arrangements with Dr. Lowell,

inventor of the Reddy tee, the Glen Oaks members became very valuable volunteer missionaries for the revolutionary invention.

Learn from Salesmen

Murphy relates that as an assistant and as a young pro he learned a lot from the pioneer salesmen, particularly Matt Kiernan of Spalding and Jack Jolly of St. Mungo.

"The professional has a serious problem in organizing his buying in the way that a store buyer can do the job but he's got to handle his salesmen relations, his buying and inventory control as very important phases of his service to his members and in his own profit-making. I've seen too many otherwise good men in pro golf business miss substantial success because they never learned how to organize their buying."

Murphy can speak with authority on pro buying and selling as he made a very good business deal of North British Imports which he bought from Graham Johnston in 1951. The company at one

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time had 28 salesmen. It handled North British golf balls, rubber golf shoes, jackets and George Nicoll woods and irons which Murphy had shafted in the United States. He operated that company while giving his pro job thoroughly satisfactory care. He credits Glen Oaks members with helpfulness out of their own experience and observations that aided in making a success of North British Imports.

Murphy attributes much of golf's current boom to women's increased interest in the game. "Golf club membership became a status symbol instead of only a matter of sport and when the physical and mental values of golf, in addition to its social values, were discovered by millions of women, then the big growth started.

What the professional's business future will be depends considerably on the propaganda and education work the pros do with women golfers, Murphy forecasts. •

Sun Mastr Corp. purchases Ideal Power Lawn Mower

Negotiations have recently been completed between Robert Crump, vice president, Sun-Mastr Corporation, Olathe, Kansas, and the Mast-Foos Mfg. Company of Springfield, Ohio, for the purchase of the Ideal Power Lawn Mower Company, including all records, drawings, patterns, jigs and inventory.

Ideal Mowers have been manufactured for more than 50 years. The primary product is a heavy duty gang lawn mower for use on golf and country clubs, parks, airports and highway rights of way.

The equipment is being moved to the Sun-Mastr plant at Olathe, Kansas and the Sun-Mastr Ideal division will operate from the Sun-Mastr plant at 501 South Kansas in Olathe.

According to Crump, this addition to the Sun-Mastr line will be distributed nationally through dealer channels and will make it possible for the users of this type of equipment to obtain mowers and repair parts service quickly.

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