

# Sizing up golfwear

By VINCENT PASTENA

Golf / Golfdom fashion editor

If you're looking for hot, new pro shop merchandise, blazers might fill the bill. Some 1,000 shops in the U.S. already carry blazers and more are taking the initial steps toward establishing blazer sales programs, according to Chuck Cumming, vice president of sales for Charles A. Eaton Co., manufacturer of Etonic shoes and apparel.

Of the more than 7,000 pro shops in the country, Cumming says, 4,500 to 5,000 have the capability to carry official club blazers. "But many pros do not realize the potential sales of this market," he notes.

However, it is obvious that a growing number of pros are rapidly becoming aware of the profit possibilities. Cumming's company alone sold Etonic blazers by Palm Beach to over 800 accounts this year, and the estimates for the coming year are even brighter.

The sales vice president feels that manufacturers' blazer sales could increase 12 to 25 per cent next year, throughout the industry.

William W. Croston, president of Croston & Carr Co., notes that pro shops at 25 per cent of the golf clubs now carry blazers as compared with seven to eight per cent only three years ago.

The company's Croston of Boston, Inc., division sold 5,000 crested club blazers during the period from August 1966 to July 1967—a figure which the company's president feels should double and could even triple next year.

Manufacturers are quick to point out the small initial investment in starting a blazer program. The club blazer is the best launching point. From here, a pro

may see the potential market for a broader line of blazers.

Although resort shops have the bigger market for high-style or fancy blazers (double-breasted, stripes, checks, etc.), several country club pro shops have moved into this area with great success after starting with club blazers.

Etonic suggests an initial order of one dozen crests and one dozen blazers, which should give the pro a good size range. The company will design the crest based on a proposed idea or an already established club crest used on stationery, matchbooks, etc. A drawing is then sent to the club for approval.

A good way for the pro to stimulate interest, Cumming says, is to get the board of directors to wear crested blazers around the club.

The company handles three basic Etonic blazers by Palm Beach in a traditional three-button, patch-pocket style: a Bataya cloth (a blend of Dacron, rayon and cotton), retail \$39.95; a wool flannel, retail \$47.50; and a hopsack of Dacron and wool, retail \$49.95.

The three blazers also are available in two-button models. All come in a wide range of colors.

Of the three fabrics, light-weight Bataya is the most popular because it may be worn the year round in warmer climates and from spring through fall in areas of seasonal change.

Etonic also has added a flannel double-breasted blazer to its line, retail \$55.

An Etonic crest with gold embroidery retails for \$14.95. Of course, this can vary with the elaborateness of the design.

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The crest may be sewn onto the blazer pocket by hand or may be fastened with a clip device on the back.

Croston, whose blazers are handled by its pro shop sales agent, Ernie Sabayrac, Inc., of Miami Springs, Fla., suggests another method of starting a blazer program. For a shop at a small club, the pro may buy two created blazers. He wears one and displays the other in the clubhouse or pro shop.

In addition, Croston, who manufactures pockets with the crests directly embroidered on them, suggests the pro carry six or seven such pockets.

When members order blazers, the pro forwards the pockets to Croston along with the blazer sizes. The pockets are sewn on and the blazers are delivered in a few days, depending on the location of the club.

Croston's most popular model for club blazers is a three-button, natural shoulder jacket with patch pockets and metal buttons in a Dacron and wool tropical fabric. This style also is available in pure worsted wool, doeskin and worsted flannel.

The company's president notes, however, that Croston's two-button models are more widely accepted on the West Coast, while the East Coast favors the more traditional three-button model. Croston also manufactures a women's blazer. The top three colors in order of popularity are navy, Dartmouth green (a forest green) and marine blue (a medium blue). Six other colors also are available.

Suggested retail price for Croston's hand-tailored blazer with hand-made crest is \$79.50. Croston will design the crest for a club.

Both Etonic and Croston offer pros quantity discounts on the crest, but jackets wholesale for a set price regardless of quantity ordered.

Approval for a club blazer varies, Bill Croston says. Some pros take it upon themselves to establish a club blazer, while others must seek the approval of the

president, golf committee or board of governors before doing so.

Manufacturers point out that blazer alterations present few problems for the pros. Generally, the proper fit for a blazer is more casual than that for a suit coat, and extensive tailoring is rarely required.

For minor alterations, pros may make arrangements with local tailors. Chuck Cumming estimates that some 600 pro shops already have arrangements for fast alterations. A few even have tailors on the premises.

Many pros have discovered a side advantage to blazer sales. They seem to stimulate slack sales. In fact, some smart merchandisers are displaying blazers with coordinated slacks.

In pointing out the bright future for blazers in pro shops, Cumming says some pros are finding they have no choice in the matter of selling club blazers. More and more members want to be identified with their clubs today, and are practically forcing pros into the business •

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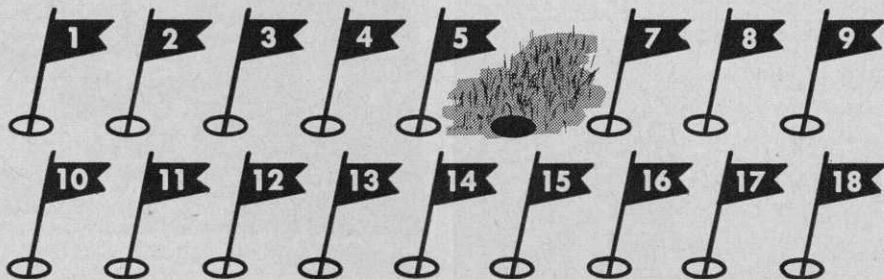
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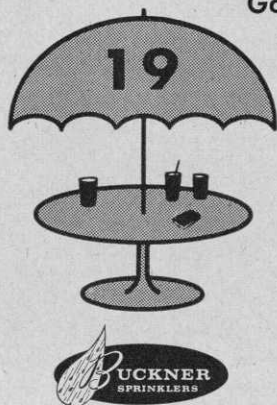


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