

# Give the lady

# what she wants

***A recent survey shows that many pro shops should be more aware of the wants and needs of their women golfers.***

By JOE DOAN

Today, the golf professional has a position that requires more than the ability to get up on the tee and give a lesson.

Besides being a proficient teacher and player, he has to be able to give the type of service his members demand.

He must be a merchandiser in the sense of knowing what and how much inventory to stock, how to display and sell it and to make the members feel welcome in their own pro shop.

Since the women golfers are becoming more important to the amount of sales the pro makes, GOLFDOM Magazine took a poll at a two-ball foursome tournament, run by the Chicago District Golf Association. Thirty-two women from twenty-seven different clubs were interviewed.

The women were asked to give their opinions as to pro shop prices, displays, service and accessibility of pro shops to women's lockerrooms.

They were also asked to give appraisals of the pro and his staff as to merchandising knowhow, and to estimate the percentage of their purchases, including shoes, clothing and equipment, that is made through the pro shop.

Finally, they were given the option or opportunity to do a little swinging by stating what they thought was needed to improve the pro's operation at each of their respective clubs.

The women voted almost three to one that pro shop prices are fair, considering

the quality of merchandise offered. "Fair, but slightly on the high side" seems to be a favorite expression of women players when discussing prices. It was used by, perhaps, as many as ten of them. As many others pointed out, pro shop prices are in line with those charged by better department stores and smart women's apparel shops.

Pro shop operators, in the opinion of the ladies, do a reasonably good job of displaying merchandise. In several instances, the word "good" was qualified by the remark, "considering the space he has." Eighteen of those interviewed actually gave the displays at their clubs a *good* or *excellent* rating; six said *fair*; four said *poor* or *indifferent*; and four were non-committal.

Those who were critical of displays said selections were skimpy, poorly coordinated, lacked variety or were poorly presented. Eight women, at clubs where a saleslady was not employed in the shop, said that one is urgently needed.

"Men just don't know how to buy for or sell to women," one lady remarked. "If our pro can't afford to hire a woman full time, he should at least bring in a consultant to take charge of his buying and set up his woman's department."

Another said: "I have no kick on the stock or the way it is displayed. But the pro and his staff treat woman kind of casually—as though they don't care if they get their business or not."

Those who are favorably impressed by displays and merchandising at their clubs say one reason is the pros are smart enough to give as much space to showing women's attire as men's. Another is that remainders are sold out at the end of the season, and fresh stock brought in for the new year.

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Probably most important, pros who are selling the most merchandise put some effort into making sales without pushing them. Women golfers, it was brought out quite strongly, don't resist selling efforts. Better this than being neglected or treated as second-class purchasers. Most women who rated their shops high in over-all merchandising, pointed out that their pros employed women assistants.

Pros and their staff have mastered the knack of giving service. That is the opinion of 25 of the 32 ladies who cooperated in the GOLFDOM survey. In fact, when it comes to handling and cleaning clubs, the proportion is even higher. There was practically no criticism of the way these things are done.

**W**hen it comes to handling customers though, the story is a little different. A few women said they thought their pros and assistants could be more alert and helpful in this respect.

Two women said that too many outside tournaments are held at their clubs, often resulting in poor pro shop service for members. However, they added that pros are not to blame in this situation because the clubs give them no other choice but to cater to the outside business.

The general tenor of the ladies' remarks was that the pros and their staffs, at a minimum of 80 per cent of the clubs, give service beyond what is reasonably expected. One woman even went so far as to remark that she has always wondered how the pro at her club, who runs the shop on a make-or-break basis, can afford to give as much unremunerated service as he does.

As for accessibility to women's lockerrooms, more than two out of three shops were considered conveniently located. In a few cases where they were not, displays were set up in the lockerrooms, or a saleslady brought in stock and displays and sold it on ladies day or other special occasions when women's events were held.

Most of the shops now have dressing rooms, but as several women pointed out, the rooms are uncomfortably small. Usually this problem is found in older shops where the pro, already pressed for space, squeezed them in at members' request.

Rather surprisingly, 14 women said their clubs need new shops, nine said their shops are adequate and nine others said their clubs have what are considered to be good or excellent shops.

Nevertheless, often the pro is handicapped to some extent by the dimensions and conditions of his shop.

**O**ne of the 32 clubs has had a new shop built in the last year, and at two locations the shops have been enlarged. As far as it is known, two new shops are planned for this year.

Generally, the concensus is that pros are somewhat handicapped by their working surroundings, mostly because the shops were built many years ago and now just aren't adequate. In several cases there is no direction in which the shops can be expanded.

The 32 women estimated that they buy 60 per cent of their golf clothing and playing equipment in pro shops. Those who wear spike shoes, and most do, buy them exclusively at the golf shop. This is pretty much in line with what pros themselves have estimated in past GOLFDOM surveys.

Pros have close to a monopoly in sales of spike shoes to women players. However, five women stated that they would like to see their shops stock a wider variety of styles, brands and colors.

Six women said they do little or no buying in the shops at their clubs because it is almost impossible for them to find clothes that fit; they don't like their pros' tastes in styles or colors; or the shops are so male-oriented, a woman's patronage is discouraged.

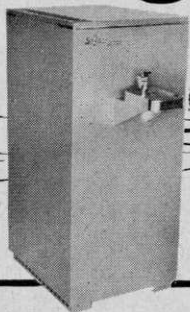
Five women stated that they buy almost 100 per cent in the pro shops, but not necessarily those at their own clubs. These women pointed out that they save

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## Book Review

*Better Golf After Fifty*, by Gene Sarazen, with Roger P. Ganem. Published by Harper & Row, Inc., 49 E. 33rd St., New York, N.Y. 10016. Price \$4.95.

Who is better qualified than Gene Sarazen, the world's foremost senior golfer, to instruct our senior golfers on how to maintain their game? This book, which is long-needed, is filled with helpful pointers on how and when to hit the woods and irons, how to make the putter pay off, effective ways of getting out of trouble and a whole lot more. More than 60 photographs help the reader to follow Gene's advice. He also tells you how to maintain your strength and use different exercises to get ready for golf. Gene Sarazen has won almost every major golf title in golf and is regarded as the world ambassador of golf.

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a large portion of their golf shopping money for those occasions when they visit other clubs.

With the exception of golf balls, it was indicated that women golfers buy at least 80 per cent of their playing equipment from the pros. About one-fourth of those interviewed said they use only cheaper than pro-line balls, and seven others said they buy a combination of pro-line brands and cheaper balls.

Perhaps some of the reasons for this become more obvious when the women do a little swinging on their own:

"Much of the sportswear is too large and matronly for the small woman. You run into this anywhere you go — pro shops or downtown stores. Perhaps manufacturers should take another look at the statistics. If they did they'd make more clothing for the small woman."

"I'd like to see someone design an

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appropriate golf hat for women. Many of those we have to choose from are too masculine in appearance."

"Women's golf shoes are not made as well as men's. They have too much play around the instep, and when they start to get old they flop around on your feet."

"The pro at our club drives us away from his shop. He doesn't have much of a selection for women, what he has is too conservative and plus the fact that he sells everything on a, take it or leave it, basis. Then he complains because the women don't support the shop."

"There aren't enough women players at our club to make it profitable for the pro to stock heavily. He's most cooperative in ordering whatever we want, but it takes too much time for the orders to be filled. Few women are willing to put up with the delays."

"Women golfers are still not getting

proper recognition. Too much emphasis is placed on taking care of the men. I don't know what proportion of golf goods are sold to women, but it seems that it should be high, considering the amount of golf we play. If all pros are like the one we have, they aren't taking advantage of their women's market."

"A feminine touch is needed around a golf shop. If a pro doesn't have a woman employee, perhaps he'd be smart to ask the advice of some of the women members on what to buy, and how to display it."

Obviously, the survey points out that the wise pro should make a stronger attempt to attract a larger amount of sales from the women golfers.

Although the pro may not have a gold mine in sales to women, it is apparent from the ladies' comments that his profits will increase if he is more aware of their needs and wants and does his best to meet them. •



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