

30 yards makes a world of difference

by Desmond Tolhurst Senior Editor



New pro shop complex at Lake Success GC was built a stone's throw away from the old site. Result is a command post for the entire golf operation.

It's not often that a pro gets a new shop. Unless he comes on the scene when a new course and clubhouse is being built, he often has to make do with what was good enough 20, 30 and 40 years ago. Quite often, these old shops were not even a part of the clubhouse—as is ideal in most instances—although hopefully they were at least en route to or near the first tee.

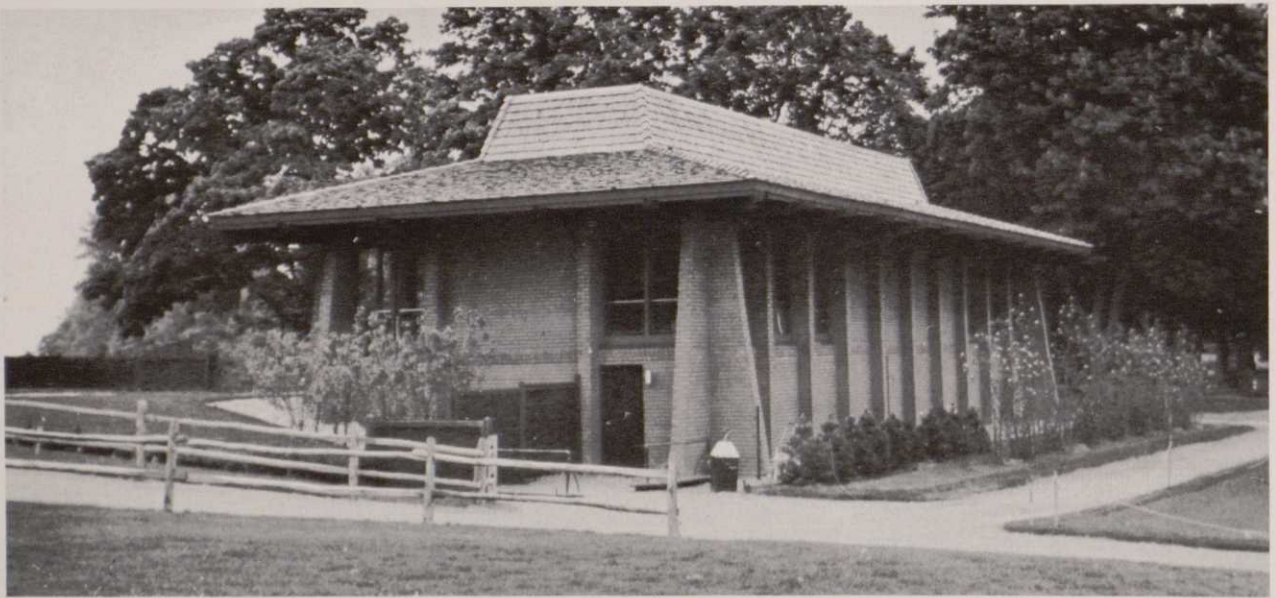
This was much the situation that faced Nick Martino, head professional at Lake Success GC, Long Island, New York, before his new shop was recently completed. "The old shop," says Nick, "was built sometime in the early 20's. It was then

the pro shop for the old Deepdale club, when the course was the playground of the 'Gold Coast' millionaires. The clubhouse—originally the home of the Vanderbilts—is about 100 yards away. It's in back of the ninth green and overlooks Lake Success.

"Then, about 11 years ago, they built the Long Island Expressway, which cut right through the old Deepdale course. The Deepdale club moved a mile or so down the road, and on this side of the expressway, the Lake Success Golf Club was created.

"The old pro shop, like many of that era, was very small," Nick says. In fact,

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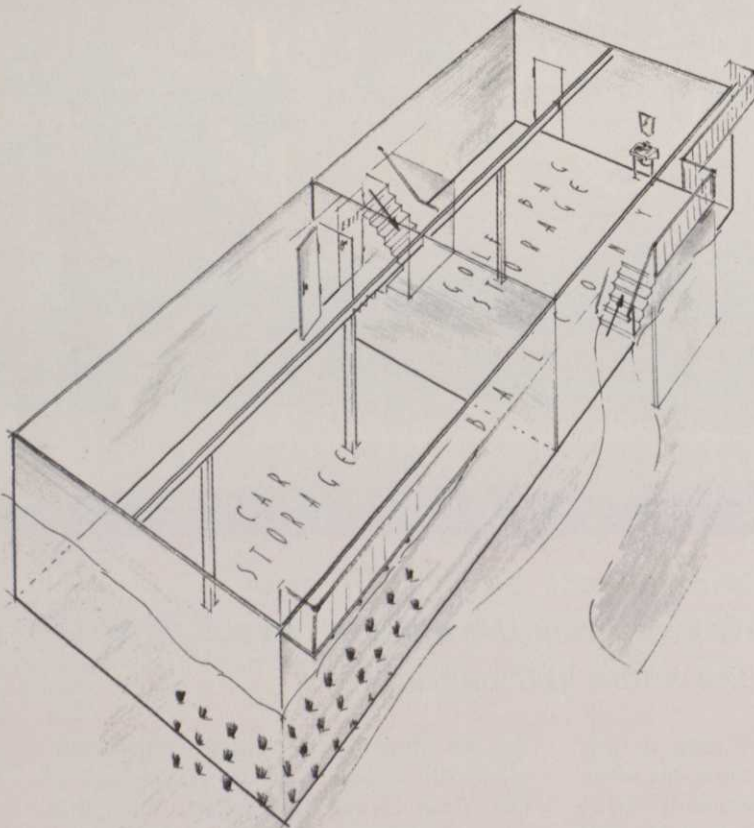
30 yards *Continued from preceding page*

in recent years we extended so that it ended up as approximately a 37 foot square building. Into this space we had to cram the showroom, merchandise storage and club storage areas, and it wasn't really possible to do any sort of a merchandising job. The advent of golf cars caused another headache, as they had to be stored in the barn, which was a quarter of a mile away."

The old pro shop was pretty conveniently located between the first and 10th tees. However, the front of the shop only looked out on the 18th green. Since Nick's pro shop served as the message center for the club, it was annoying to have to come out of the shop and then turn and go to either the first or 10th tee in order to find someone. Obviously something had to be done.

"Around June or July of 1967," says Nick, "we began to get the idea for a new shop. Mr. Richard Antanoff, who was chairman of the village golf commission and is now the mayor of Lake Success, was greatly instrumental in getting the project started and seeing it through to the finish."

The new pro shop, completed this spring, was designed to overcome the problems of the old setup. "It's only 30 yards away from the site of the old shop," says Nick, "but that 30 yards makes a world of difference. The new shop is in effect a command post from which we can run the whole golf opera-



Sketch of lower level of new pro shop building is shown above. Golf bag storage is conveniently located just below the pro shop. Also, the bag storage man can see out toward the club's car park, and get a member's bag sent up to the first tee rack well ahead of time. Picture at top shows view of pro shop building from the bag storage end. Also on the lower level is the golf car storage area. Cars can be rapidly delivered to the first and 10th tees. Exit from car storage can be seen in photo at top of opposite page. Golf cars are parked right outside the car storage exit until needed at the first or 10th tees.



tion. Today, I can look out over the first tee and 18th green right from the shop, while keeping an eye on the traffic coming from the clubhouse and ninth green. By just stepping outside the door, I can also check the action on the 10th tee."

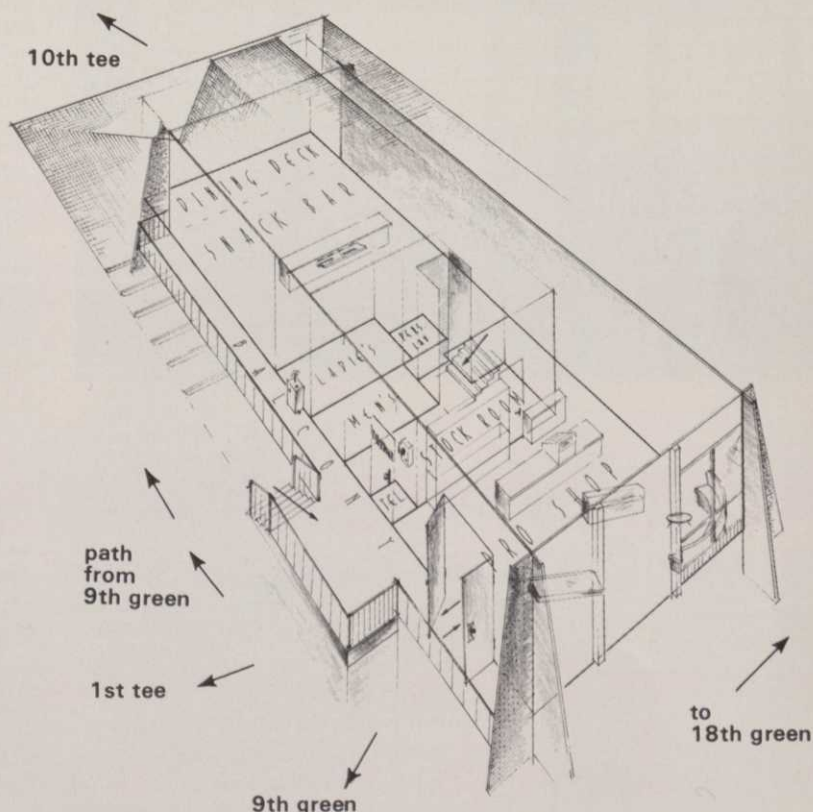
The facilities of the new shop include a snack bar, the pro shop and shop storage on the upper level, and, on the lower, are the golf cars and bag storage areas. (See diagrams).

"Formerly, the 'half-way' snack bar was located up in the clubhouse on the side facing the ninth green," Martino points out. "From there, of course, nobody could see whether the 10th tee was clear or not. With this new snack bar overlooking the 10th tee, (See photo next page) everyone can see when it is his turn to go. I have found that this has speeded up play by at least 20 minutes a round.

"Right below the new pro shop is the bag storage room. The door is much closer to the parking lot, which is beyond the 18th green by the clubhouse. As a member pulls his car in, my man downstairs can see him and have his bag ready for him, so that he doesn't have to come down for it. As regards to the golf cars, we can now, of course, achieve much more efficient service having them housed in the new building."

An added plus of the new setup is that the space originally occupied by the old shop has been landscaped attractively and provided with tables and benches. This will now be an outside snack area, pro-

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Sketch of upper level of new pro shop building is shown above. Pro shop has picture windows on three sides so that head pro Martino can see the 18th fairway and green, the path leading from the ninth green past the pro shop to the snack bar and 10th tee, and the first tee. (See diagram on page 60 also). Snack bar overlooks 10th tee so that golfers can see when it is their time to tee it up. (Formerly, snack bar was in the main clubhouse opposite the ninth green). Martino estimates this feature alone will speed up play by 20 minutes a round. Photo at top shows, at left, golf car storage exit. Above this storage area, on 2nd floor level, is the snack bar and the steps at right lead up to the pro shop.



Above right, Nick Martino's daughter Nancy (under clock) shows the latest in head covers to Patty Keating, women's club champion at Lake Success for the last three years. Above left, a general view of Nick's new shop, showing the ample room for eye-catching displays of equipment and apparel. At left is the view from the snack bar overlooking the 10th tee. In high traffic situations, patio in background is also utilized.



30 yards

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viding overflow capacity to the snack bar.

The new pro shop itself is naturally Nick's pride and joy. "We now have double the space in our new showroom than in the old shop. It is 35 by 50 feet, with picture windows on all three sides. I've also gained a very large stock room. In fact, I have as much room in my new stock room as I had in the whole of the old shop!"

The members at Lake Success have responded to the new shop's tasteful decor and well-dressed displays by giving Martino his best spring sales ever. "Sales of apparel have almost doubled over the comparable period last year," says Nick. "The hard goods have also moved faster. They're buying more, of course, because of the appearance of the place. They're attracted to it and feel proud of it. They're really happy to do business here.

"Many membes have told me that the new building gives them the feeling that

they are on vacation at, say, the Diplomat, or Dorado Beach. The fine new surroundings definitely put them in a buying mood."

Martino gives credit to Mr. Antanoff for the financing of the new building. "We spent around \$120,000 on the project," says Nick. "We're not a membership club where raising a hundred thousand is just a matter of raising the dues or slapping an assessment on the members. This is a village-owned club, and getting the residents to put up the money needed skillful presentaton and a lot of diplomacy.

"We have around 450 players here, of which 340 are resident members and 110 are non-resident. The non-resident members really pay the freight. They pay \$1,350 per year for their membership, whereas residents pay only \$375 a year. Essentially, the club is private, in the sense that though non-members who are residents of Lake Success can tee it up for

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30 yards

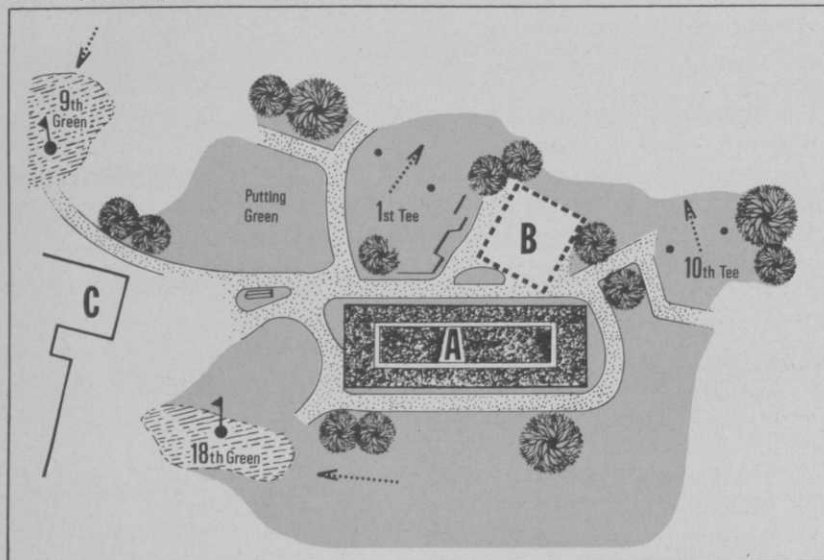
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a fee, there are time restrictions on their play.

"The club is run as a non-profit enterprise," adds Nick. "We spend any profits we make on improving the course and other faci-

lities. In this regard, I would like to give credit to our golf course superintendent, Nate Squire, who has been with us for the last seven years or so. He's done a fabulous job. Before he came here the course was a cow pasture and today we are all very proud of it.

The layout at Lake Success, below: "A," new pro shop building; "B," site of old pro shop; "C," clubhouse: Nick's new shop overlooks major areas.



"A lot of land was taken away from the course when the Long Island Expressway came through here. In fact, we have only five of the original Deepdale holes left. However, by fully utilizing the land, we came up with not merely 18 holes, but two extra par 3 holes which we can alternate as conditions dictate."

No story about Lake Success would be complete without mentioning the practice facilities of the club. At most places, you charge your bucket of balls and flail away on the range. "If you came into my shop," says Nick, "I would sell you two dozen balls in a plastic bag for a dollar. Once I give you that bag of balls, they're



Unique driving range setup has golfers buy a bag of balls, hit into Lake Success.

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yours. The reason for this is that due to lack of land, our range is Lake Success. You hit off a narrow strip of ground below the clubhouse and each ball finds a watery grave. But this way I don't have to hire anybody to retrieve them and I don't have worry about ball losses."

If there's a moral to this story, perhaps it should be along the lines that even if some conditions are less than ideal, a little ingenious problem-solving can come up with something that does the job. Certainly the new pro shop complex at Lake Success and the unusual driving range are great examples of ingenuity in action. □