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**S**tatistics cannot cause an industry to prosper automatically. But statistics can help an industry grow intelligently. They can help individuals in the industry to plan their jobs more intelligently and they can reduce the risk of faulty decisions based on inadequate knowledge. This is the purpose of the First Annual Marketing and Research Issue of GOLFDOM.

In the past decade, since the birth of our sister publication GOLF Magazine, this recreational industry of ours has grown at an unprecedented rate. From an estimated 3,970,000 of 10 years ago, the number of golfers in the United States has grown by 183 per cent to an estimated 11 million golfers. It should be mentioned that these golfers represent the hard core of the sport who, by calculation of the National Golf Foundation, play at least 15 rounds each annually. Moreover, they constitute an affluent market in an affluent society already attuned to a growing amount of leisure time. The median age of the GOLF Magazine subscriber, for instance, is a mature 40.

The typical golfer has attained a relatively high income level in

his business or profession. The average income of a GOLF subscriber head of household is close to \$17,000 annually. The golfer, in addition to playing at his club or local facilities, also is taking an increasing number of vacations of which the primary purpose is golf. Almost four in 10 golfers now take golf vacations, accounting for the rapid rise in the past decade of the golf resort.

By conservative estimate, the size of the golf market now exceeds five billion dollars a year. This is the revenue grossed annually by the three key figures who serve the golfing public directly:

- the retailer of equipment dominated by the licensed pro (with his added revenue from golf car rentals and lessons) for an aggregate of over \$800 million annually;
- the club manager and superintendent through whom are channeled some \$2.7 billion a year in club dues and green fees;
- the club manager whose food and beverage sales now amount to approximately \$1.5 billion a year.

In addition, millions are being spent outside the golf industry

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for travel, accommodations and apparel.

The 11 million golfers (87 per cent male) who comprise the core of American golfing today are growing in numbers at a rate of approximately 6.5 per cent a year. They are playing on 9,400 courses which are expanding at the rate of about 300 courses annually. It's almost impossible to evaluate the net worth of these installations or the rocketing investment they represent in land. But for new courses, the costs of construction range from \$350,000 to nearly one million dollars, depending on size and location.

The foregoing are just some of the high dollar figures which make golf a major economic factor in the nation's burgeoning glamour industry—leisure. How do some of these figures break down? What is the pattern of expenditures? How do your club's operations compare with the national

norm? How do these figures show where you are performing well and where there are areas for improvement in your operations?

GOLFDOM'S First Annual Marketing and Research Issue makes a start toward answering some of these questions in specific areas, notably pro shop operations, club management of food and beverage operations and budget planning and expenditures for course maintenance by the superintendent. The breakdown of information was made possible by a detailed questionnaire mailed by GOLFDOM to hundreds of pros, club managers and superintendents. We thank all of these people who took the time and trouble to answer our questionnaires; in doing so, they have demonstrated themselves to be the kind of professional people who understand that an industry prospers and benefits from the sharing of information. We would

also like to acknowledge the tremendous contributions being made to a better understanding of the golf business by such statistic-gathering groups as the National Golf Foundation and accounting firms serving the industry such as Horvath and Horvath, and Harris, Kerr & Foster.

We issue this First Marketing and Research Study with the knowledge that it represents a first step—necessarily a bold one and unquestionably leaving room for improvement and correction next year and in succeeding years. What this study does represent, though, is a comprehensive attempt to pull together what we know about the golf business today. Grasping this knowledge and making use of it is an opportunity that belongs to you. Only by a broad understanding of the industry of which you are a member, is it possible for you to succeed in your own efforts.

Course maintenance  
Club management  
Pro shop operations