

Is Your Shop Ready for the '70s?

**A broader approach
to merchandising
can increase today's
pro shop sales to a
high volume business**

*Based on an interview
by Jean Conlon
with Vincent De P. Draddy,
president of
David Crystal, Inc.*

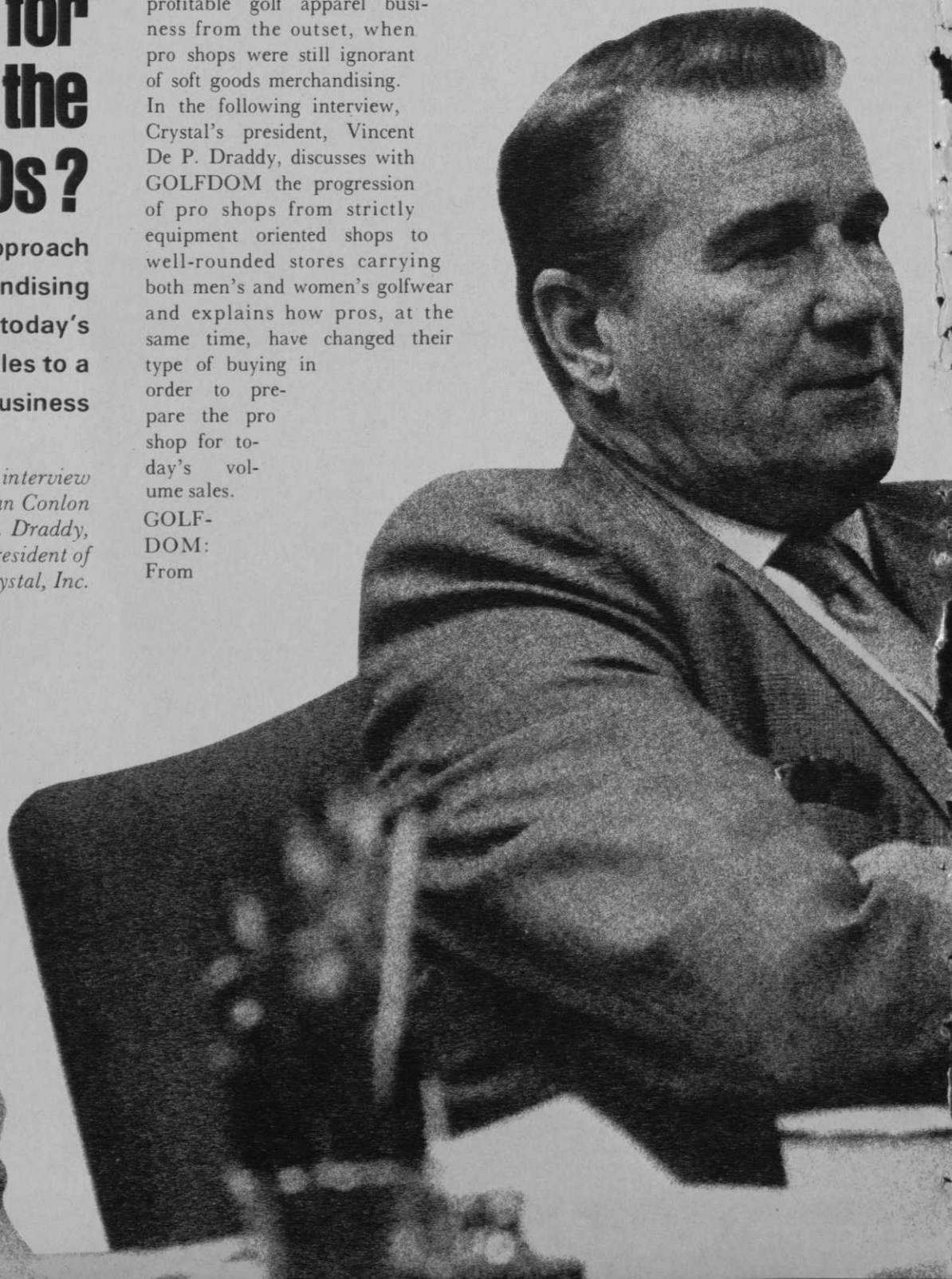
Fashion is an important part of today's pro shop sales. Attractive golf apparel has become as much a part of the game as good equipment for golfers, who are demanding not only performance but style in their sportswear.

Realizing the growing need for quality golfwear, soft goods manufacturers are developing lines exclusively for pro shop buyers. One such company, David Crystal, Inc., recognized the potential of a profitable golf apparel business from the outset, when pro shops were still ignorant of soft goods merchandising. In the following interview, Crystal's president, Vincent De P. Draddy, discusses with GOLFDOM the progression of pro shops from strictly equipment oriented shops to well-rounded stores carrying both men's and women's golfwear and explains how pros, at the same time, have changed their type of buying in order to prepare the pro shop for today's volume sales.

**GOLF-
DOM:**
From

a manufacturer's point of view, do you feel the pro has broadened his merchandising knowledge over the years?

DRADDY: The pro has come a long way since Izod's pro division was started over 20 years ago. As a matter of fact, most pro shops in those days were completely ignorant of soft goods merchandising. We, at



David Crystal, were very fortunate that we started in the early stages of the pro shop business. In fact, we were instrumental in transforming many pro shops' images from little shops to efficient operations with sound merchandising policies. They have always carried golf bags, clubs and other equipment, but in the early days pro shops carried very little apparel—a few inexpensive shirts, some cheap socks and a couple of windbreakers. This was the extent of their apparel line. Today pro shops are really stores. They buy like a store. They have a wide variety of merchandise, they have colors and they even coordinate many of their clothes. Now a golfer can go into a pro shop and can come out well-fitted.

GOLFDOM: Do you find that there is a notable change in the type of buying pros do?

DRADDY: I think the professional is improving his type and methods of buying. I think he has a greater appreciation now of fine merchandise than he ever has had before. I think he understands quality, which he wasn't too familiar with. I think he has learned that it is just as easy to sell good merchandise as it is cheap merchandise.

chandise. In fact, it is probably easier for him, and the percentage of profit is greater than taking the markdown on the cheaper merchandise, which people probably never wanted in the first place.

GOLFDOM: Are pros becoming more aware of quality merchandise?

DRADDY: Pro shops have found they can sell quality. This, I think, was one of the things that we did for them—we introduced them to quality and made them believe in it. The pro can get the price for a good shirt or a good pair of pants or a good jacket or whatever.

GOLFDOM: Therefore, are pros buying more expensive apparel today and are these items readily accepted by their customers?

DRADDY: Today, \$10 is practically their normal price of a shirt, and from \$10 up to \$20, I would say, is pretty much in the range of what the good pro shops now carry. A so-called \$5, \$6 or \$7 shirt is almost non-existent in good pro shops.

The acceptance of the higher priced lines in the pro shop now is almost a certainty. A woman walks into a pro shop, and she can and will buy a little culotte for \$35 right off the table.

At first pros didn't believe they could sell expensive merchandise. Now they have found out just the reverse—they deal with members who have a lot of money and who spend a lot of money on golf, on cars and living in general. The golfer is looking for quality, because he is quality-oriented already from his normal mode of living.

GOLFDOM: In what way does today's pro shop differ from yesterday's?

DRADDY: There are very beautiful pro shops today, which is quite a departure from the past. The pro shop of 25 years ago is rapidly disappearing, because the pro has learned that he can make a very good income by paying attention to his pro shop and in some cases he can make more than he can by teaching for \$8 or \$10 an hour. A couple of good sales in the pro shop could equal a whole day's lessons.

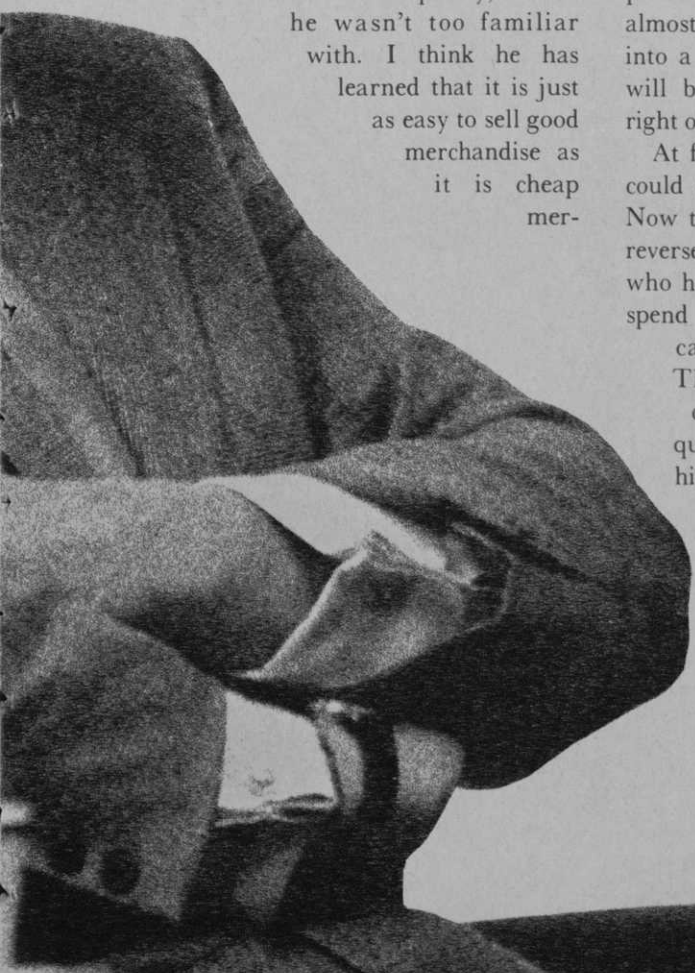
GOLFDOM: Are you finding that there is less and less one season buying in pro shops and more all year-round buying?

DRADDY: Pro shop sales depend a great deal on location. In the north, after the first of January, many courses close up because there is no business, just a lot of snow on the ground. In the Pinehurst area, the season lasts a long time. For the Sea Island area, professionals get a good six-months' business and, of course, California is generally year-round. Florida is getting to be year-round, too. It really depends on the location of the pro shop. But I would say that the pro shop business season has lengthened out considerably over what it used to be. In many areas it used to be two or three months, but today it's a minimum of six months, wherever the pro shop is located.

GOLFDOM: Does location also determine the type of trade the pro shop can expect?

DRADDY: Pro shops in resort areas look for boutique type of

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SHOP READY

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trade. If it is a local pro shop where the pro has his own membership, he can sell a lot of good merchandise that doesn't necessarily have to be for boutiques. It can be really good, top quality merchandise.

GOLFDOM: What are the main reasons why members prefer to shop at their local pro shop?

DRADDY: Members will buy from their pro rather than go to the store, because it is frequently more convenient for them. What is more important, perhaps, is that there is a certain exclusiveness in buying in the local pro shop. Everybody doesn't have that privilege. And a golfer can say, "I bought this in my pro shop," implying that only a selected few can buy there.

GOLFDOM: Does the "quality merchandise" the golfer can now buy at the pro shop include after-golf apparel.

DRADDY: I think that as the golf pros shops throughout the country are enlarged and made more attractive by their clubs, the pros will find that they can sell more things that are not actually applicable to golf. Members use the pro shops now as a private store. The results are that many good pro shops sell a variety of clothing, which has nothing to do with golf—apparel a golfer could wear at the clubhouse. Some of them even carry and do well with children's clothes, particularly in the resort pro shops.

GOLFDOM: What do you find the sales breakdown to be and where does your company place its sales emphasis—on the men's or women's golfwear lines?

DRADDY: I believe David Crystal was the first manufacturer of men's and women's apparel that really got into the pro shop business in its very early stages. Originally, we did it with our eye on just men's lines because pro shops in those days were very much a man's operation. After several

years of very successfully selling the Izod men's line, Crystal's sales agency thought that they could sell some women's merchandise as well. We already were well-established with our Haymaker women's wear line, which has been one of the most successful sportswear operations in the past 25 years. So we added another line, a small line of Haymaker to go with Izod, and the results were amazing. As time went on, we began putting as much emphasis on the women's line as we did on the men's. Today I would say that our sales of men's and women's sportswear are almost equal.

GOLFDOM: Has this balance of sales always been apparent in pro shop business?

DRADDY: Originally the pro shops catered almost exclusively to men. As the years rolled by, and the pro became more aware that he had a lot of women playing golf, who wanted good clothes and were willing to buy them from him, he gradually started to put in women's clothes. Today the average good, well-stocked pro shop is practically doing 50 per cent of its business in women's apparel. And these women are demanding fashionable clothes. Women who belong to these clubs are already affluent and sophisticated. They are not going to buy anything but nice clothes,

GOLFDOM: Do you think that there will ultimately be more women's than men's wear purchased by the pros?

DRADDY: More women are participating in golf, and it is becoming a great game for young married women today. They play in a lot of golf tournaments, and some actually play more than their husbands. Therefore, their needs are greater. They wouldn't be caught on the course the next day with the same outfit they wore before. So, all these things are going to be a big help in women's sportswear sales. I would say the day could conceivably come when the good pro shops might even have a 60 to 40 ratio, women to men. □

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