

PGA



Show Notes

The spectacular, immense, bewildering success of the Professional Golfers' Assn. Merchandise Show at the PGA National GC, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla, was far ahead of anything else that's happened in the trade division affairs of professionals, superintendents and club managers.

A veteran in golf business said to me at Palm Beach Gardens: "This is the revolution. We came in wondering how to sell. Now we wonder what to buy."

How right he was. Because of the wealth of golf fashion merchandise displayed at the show, there was confusion and danger for many professionals.

"What should I buy out of all this clothing to sell to women at our place?" was the query of hundreds. The answer isn't easy, and if the pro doesn't get it, he'll get stuck with plenty of merchandise he will have to sell at less than

overall cost before his season closes.

Pat Williams, PGA educational director, heard much about the buying problem, and his listening and hunting for solutions will be reflected in the professional association's business school program. Despite the progress professionals have made in clothing, shoe and headwear merchandising at private and fee clubs, their success mainly has been the result of having wives with fashion foresight or women shop assistants who knew what to buy.

The men's sportswear pro shop pioneers, such as DiFini and Izod did a grand job of opening the pro shop market for women's apparel and have cashed in nicely. Ernie Sabayrac was saying at the show that his company last year sold 100,000 of the new Lacoste golf outfits for women through pro shops. At \$32.50 a dress, this compares nicely with any

one line of woods or irons.

One thing that has baffled pros is that what sells to women at one club won't at another club, two miles down the road. And when the specialists who buy women's wear for stores can't come up with the right answers, it's no wonder the pro worries about what to buy at a large show.

Henry Lindner, pro at Lost Tree Club, North Palm Beach, and one of golf's smartest businessmen, came along while I was listening to some pros telling of their indecision about buying at the show.

"Three-quarters of my dollar volume down here is men's and women's apparel. It wears out soon and without complaint, and fashions change. I wish we could say the same of clubs and balls, but they are such long-lasting big bargains that the customers seem to wear out first," he said.

—Herb Graffis





Fashion Notes

It was obvious from the show that golfwear is moving into a place of importance not only at the PGA exhibition but back home in the pro shops. Buying was heavy, as more and more active sportswear manufacturers were offering golfwear lines to be sold exclusively to the pros.

Manufacturers are no longer concerning themselves with the total, coordinated look, but are concentrating their efforts on producing ready-to-wear and accessories that are not only functional, but fashionable. New among this year's merchandise are wrap skirts with matching short shorts underneath and wrinkle resistant Treviera polyester stretch

slacks designed with a diagonal weave. A new golf glove is now on the market made of Lycra spandex (the classic underwear fabric), which doubles as an exercise glove. Lightweight, water resistant golf hats are being featured made of Astrolon, the cloth used for the astronauts' uniforms. Also available are extremely flexible all-weather golf shoes with vinyl uppers.

Hopefully, manufacturers at next year's show will display their soft goods merchandise more attractively and give the pro more instructional guidance to help him choose clothes that would be appropriate for his particular club and his members' needs.

—Jean Conlon

Exhibitor Notes

Exhibiting members of the Golf Manufacturers and Distributors Assn. met to discuss the fate of the Professional Golfers' Assn. West Coast Merchandise Show. Members present unanimously decided that they would not exhibit at the Western show, but would concentrate their attention on further strengthening the Florida show. They felt that last year's "poor attendance" at the show in Los Angeles revealed a lack of pro interest.

However, the PGA has not altered its plans for this year's

Western show, tentatively slated for September 27 through 29 in Oakland, Calif., according to a PGA spokesman. It still is early in the year, he said, and many manufacturers and distributors may change their minds when show time approaches.

At the same meeting, members of the Golf Manufacturers and Distributors Assn. elected a slate of officers. John P. Murray Jr. of Atlantic Products will serve another term as president. Bill Kaiser of Hillerich & Bradsby and Jack Lust

of DiFini Originals, formerly on the advisory board, will be first and second vice presidents, respectively.

There apparently were no complaints about attendance at this year's Florida show. Some 4,600 people were under the "Big Top" at some time during the four days—an estimated 50 per cent increase over last year's total, according to a PGA spokesman. And it took 291 booths—33 more than last year—to display 1970's equipment and apparel.

—Vincent J. Pastena