

# Club Repair

## EXPAND AND PROFIT

by RALPH MALTBY\*

Day in and day out club repairs are fine and particularly so if you keep yourself and your staff busy. But, if you want to make more money and better service your golfers, it's easy to expand your business.

Actually, advancing repair service falls under two separate but somewhat similar categories:

1. Increasing the volume of repairs
2. Expanding into logical business extensions

### THE GOLF LESSON (OR DON'T ONLY FIX HIS SWING, FIX HIS CLUBS)

When a golf professional gives a lesson, he has an ideal opportunity to inspect the pupil's golf clubs. He may notice that the woods are in need of refinishing or a shaft is loose or bent. Clubs that need refinishing could be affected by moisture absorption or drying out, which can alter the swingweight, delaminate, swell or shrink the wood itself.

The pro can also check the fit of the pupil's equipment and recommend any alterations that will improve its performance. He might suggest new grips or a grip size change, longer or shorter lengths, a change in loft or lies or a swingweight change. With all the variations in hand size, hand height at address, swing planes and each manufacturer's own individual specifications, it can be estimated that over 80 percent of the golfers today would benefit from a proper fitting session that would determine the correct alterations to make on their clubs.

One such alteration which will occur often is changing the lofts and lies of irons. To do this you will need to acquire a loft and lie alteration device such as the Van-L Correcto, the Precision Set Machine or Kenneth Smith's iron bending tool. The costs for the aforementioned iron club alteration devices varies considerably. Before you buy, weigh the

advantages and disadvantages of each as it would apply to your specific operation. A good rule of thumb for the larger investments such as this, is to calculate your payback on investment to be somewhere between six months and one year.


### THE GOLF SHOP (OR HOW TO SELL REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS)

Here's a sure fire money-making customer satisfier that will bring in increased repair and alteration work: Get five old wood or iron shafts and cut the butt end off 16" in length. Install five new identical grips (pick one that is popular with the golfers at your club) but be sure to use a grip caliper and make each one a different size. Make the sizes as follows: 1/64" undersize, standard size, 1/64" oversize, 1/32" oversize and 1/16" oversize. Place the five grips on top of your main sales counter and make up a small sign to put with them:

**Golfers! (or Members!) Grip Size is Important.** A Proper Sized Grip Should Feel Comfortable and Should Allow the Two Middle Fingers of Your Left Hand to Barely Touch or Come Close to Your Palm.

You'll be surprised at how much grip work you can get out of this while doing a worthwhile service for your customers.

Don't worry if the golfer's grips are in good condition but only require altering the size because grips can be removed and reinstalled again. A nifty gadget is currently on the market that features an extra strong hypodermic type needle attached to a one quart capacity hand pump gun which can be filled with naphtha or some other suitable solvent. This new piece of equipment is much better than the old, hard-to-find syringes and the easily broken



*Correcting the lie in clubs is another important part of repair. To demonstrate this, get an old 4, 5 or 6 iron and by using a drill press (top) bore a 3/8 inch diameter hole in the approximate center of the face. At bottom, an old shaft is pushed into the hole. The angle of the protruding shaft helps indicate the lie of the club and show customers the importance of the proper lie.*

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## Club Repair Continued

or bent hypodermic needles. To take a grip off with this device simply inject the needle through the grip until you feel it touch the shaft and then release some solvent under the grip. Sometimes one injection will work but usually two or three injections are required before the grip will loosen and slide off.

If you have just removed a standard size grip and you want to reinstall it oversized, all you have to do is build up around the shaft with additional tape. Use  $\frac{3}{4}$ " masking tape for buildup, not the expensive double-sided miracle tape. Increasing the grip size approximately  $\frac{1}{64}$ " requires one wrapped layer of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " masking tape (do not overlap). Increasing the grip size a full  $\frac{1}{32}$ " requires one layer of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " masking tape using an overlap wrap plus one additional layer not overlapped. From this information you can figure out almost any combination of tape wrapping for a particular grip size.

Another good way to get the golfer interested in having his clubs checked for proper specifications, and hopefully more alteration work for you, is to make the following device which will show a golfer the importance of the lie angle in his irons.

Find a No. 4, 5 or 6 iron that is dispensable. Locate the approximate center of the club face (heel to toe and top to bottom) and bore a

$\frac{3}{8}$ " diameter hole through it. (Note: a drill press is recommended for this as the hole must be drilled perpendicular to the face).

Next, locate an old iron shaft and push it into the hole in the face. Now, place the club in the playing position and vary the lie angle by raising and lowering your hand height. Notice that as you lower your hands, thus raising the toe off the ground, that the protruding shaft points left of target. Now as you raise your hands, thus dropping the toe back down and raising the heel, the shaft points right of target.

This nifty, little device shows your customer the importance of having the correct lie in a club to avoid directional problems when they hit the ball. The important point to remember here is this: If a particular golfer's entire set of irons were say three degrees too upright, they have probably compensated in their swing to correct for the problem to hit the ball straight. This would seem to be a tolerable situation on the surface but upon further examination two other basic problems exist. First, being too upright by three degrees will cause the heel of the club to contact the ground during the swing, thus causing the toe of the iron to close slightly. This will cause a tendency to impart a hooking spin to the ball.

Secondly, because of a compensated swing to offset the directional problem of too upright a lie and the tendency of the blade to dig in at the heel and close the toe, the golfer has created a situation which requires the playing expertise of a touring pro if he is to have the desired consistency with his irons.

On the other hand, if the lies of a set of irons are not incrementally consistent (i.e. No. 2 iron  $1^\circ$  upright, No. 3 iron  $3^\circ$  upright, No. 4 iron  $2^\circ$  upright, etc.) then the problem is even further compounded and in theory would require a different compensating swing for each iron, if the golfer is to hit the ball perfectly straight.

The use of this homemade device coupled with a brief explanation from you of what lie is and its possible playing side effects will cause most golfers to request that you check the lie of their clubs.

A quick method to show a golfer if the lie of his irons is correct or not is as follows: Have the golfer grip his No. 5 iron, waggle it a few

times to get comfortable and then set it down in the playing position on a smooth floor. Now, take two small pieces of paper, slide one in from the toe as far as it will go and the other in from the heel as far as it will go. Exactly in between the gap of these two pieces of paper is where the club is touching the ground. Visually you can determine if the lie is too upright (papers meet toward heel of club) correct (papers meet in middle of face) or lie is too flat (papers meet toward toe of club).

Do this with each iron in the set making a light pencil mark on the bottom of the club face exactly between the two pieces of paper. Next, locate the middle of the face (measure to middle of face scoring) and make another light pencil mark so you can show your customer where he grounds each iron club relative to the center of the face. Now, get out your new loft and lie bending machine, set the correct lie (also check and alter lofts as required). Collect \$2 per club which for a full set should give you \$18 for about one-half hour of work, and watch how quickly word spreads about your new service.

Another way to increase repair and alteration business is to put a sign up in the pro shop. Tell your customers that you do this type of work and better yet list the services that you have available. Rarely will you see a sign in a pro shop telling golfers that they can have their clubs repaired or altered right on the premises. Regardless of the number of years you have been repairing and altering clubs, do not assume that every golfer that plays at your course knows this. Put up the sign, it's the least expensive form of advertising you can do and one which will reward you with increased customer awareness of your services.

### THE GOLF CLUB TRADE-INS (OR WHAT TO DO WITH THEM)

A golf professional usually accepts trade-ins from his customers when they purchase new golf clubs. The traded-in clubs can be made much more valuable if the woods are refinished and the irons refurbished. Of course, the condition of the clubs and their potential value must be considered closely before more money is invested in them. Do not rule out some half-way mea-



tures such as buffing or fine steel wooling the shafts to remove rust and dirt, replacing broken or frayed whippings, dipping or spraying a coat of clear finish over a lightly steel wooled wood head, and cleaning the face grooves in both woods and irons and paint filling them. Trade-ins are not very desirable commodities at many country clubs because of the type of clientele. In many cases, the professional at this type club will be willing to sell his used clubs for what he has invested in them. Here, it is an asset to know the present value and the potential value of used golf clubs. Acushnet publishes a used club guide that is very helpful in this respect. The used golf club business can be very profitable and grow quite large if you maintain a reputation for fair dealing and selling used clubs in the peak of condition.

### THE GOLF CLUB MANUFACTURERS (OR WHAT ABOUT BECOMING AN AUTHORIZED REPAIR SERVICE CENTER)

Some manufacturers have established authorized repair service centers throughout the United States. If a repair facility is needed in your area and you write the golf manufacturers, you may be contacted by a company representative who will usually stop in and check your facility to see if you can handle the work load and if the quality of your work is adequate. He will probably explain how many specific repair items that you would have to maintain in inventory.

### THE CLUB STORAGE ROOM (OR HOW TO GET BUSINESS IN THE WINTER MONTHS OR SLOW SEASON)

Many golf professionals work in regions where it is impractical to play golf during certain times of the year and consequently they are closed or very slow. Usually, this would be in the winter months in the northern regions. Aside from spending a month or so in Florida, closing the books for the year and ordering merchandise for spring delivery, the northern golf pro usually has some idle time on his hands. This is an ideal opportunity to go through the members' clubs in the club stor-

age room. It's a good time to check for such things as worn-out grips, loose shafts, frayed wood head whippings and wood heads which need refinishing or rejuvenating. After having gone through all the golf clubs, phone each member or drop him a note to obtain permission to repair his clubs. Most all golfers appreciate this spring tune-up service simply because they are usually too busy to think of it on their own during the off season. This type of service is becoming more popular with northern pros in particular, who refer to this service as "winterizing" and usually charge around \$20 to \$30 for a complete set of woods and irons and bag. Here's a checklist of what usually is included in winterizing:

- Either fine steel wool or buff all shafts to polish and clean them.
- Replace whippings on woods if necessary.
- Clean and rejuvenate grips if required.

**Rubber**—if slick, lightly rough-up with coarse sandpaper.

**Leather**—in all cases apply a good leather grip conditioner to soften and restore tackiness.

• If an iron club has plastic ferrules that are dull and scratched, they can be made new looking again by wiping them lightly with acetone. This also works on grip collar trim rings and plastic wood club ferrules, which are sometimes used instead of whippings.

• Finally, wipe the golf bag clean, apply saddle soap or a special lubricant to the zippers, and put the clubs back in the bag.

**Note:** A good idea is to cover the bag and clubs to protect them from dust and dirt during the storage period. The large paper or clear plastic bags that dry cleaners use work perfectly for this and are only a few pennies apiece.

So, if you're ready to reach out for a little extra business and provide more assistance to your members, then you're ready for the extra repair business. It's another way to pursue increased self-satisfaction and more profit. □

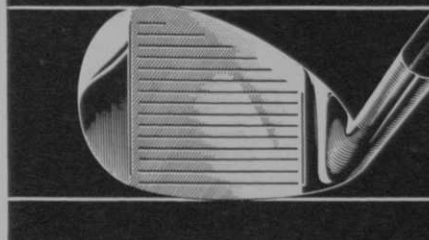
# SHORT GAME GOT YOU DOWN?

PITCHING WEDGE

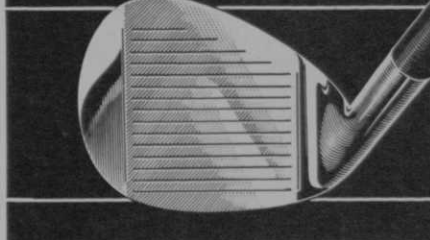


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